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LECTURES,
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LECTURES,

LITERARY AND BIOGRAPHICAL.

BY

REV. M. HARVEY,

FREE CHURCH, ST JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

5/24

EDINBURGH:

ANDREW ELLIOT, 15 PRINCES STREET.

1864.

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H. BATCHELOR 14 OCT 1935

P R E F A C E.

OF the Lectures contained in this volume I have merely to say, that they were delivered at intervals, during the last few years, on behalf of Literary Institutes, in the town of St John's, Newfoundland. Composed originally without any view to publication, amid the pressure of professional duties, and intended to meet the tastes of popular audiences, they are now, after a hasty revision, sent to the press. These circumstances may serve to extenuate some of their faults and imperfections; and, at the same time, will account for the method adopted in the treatment of the different subjects.

M. H.

ST JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND,

August 8, 1864.

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St. John's, Nfld. 11/35. 24/11/35. H. Batchelor

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LECTURE THE FIRST.

EDMUND BURKE AND OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

PART FIRST.

FEW of the names emblazoned on the rolls of fame have a better title to a high and honourable place than those of the illustrious Irishmen, Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith. These are the names of which old Ireland, the mother of many gifted children, has most reason to be proud. To have given to the cause of humanity these two sons, in whose souls the sacred fire of genius burned so brightly, is enough to console her for centuries of tears. Reading her annals, darkened by woes and oppressions, we turn with delight to trace the story of the philosophic statesman and the gentle poet, whose names are for ever intertwined with the memory of the fair land that gave them birth, and whose laurels shall never wither. Denied political greatness, her nationality merged in

that of a more prosperous and powerful neighbour, Ireland has given birth to one of the most able, far-sighted, and profound legislators of modern times ; one who first taught Englishmen to understand, appreciate, and love that constitution which is the fruit of so much toil, struggle, and suffering, and whose great thoughts are still potent in swaying the councils of Britain. Like all great men of the front-rank, Edmund Burke was far in advance of his age. He had climbed the mountain tops, and, with prophetic vision, saw far into the coming ages. His imperial imagination and glowing eloquence robed his great ideas in beauty, and winged them with might, and sent them forth to subdue the world. Condensed into aphorisms, his political wisdom has stamped itself on the memory of men, and become the practical maxims by which measures are tried and men are guided. As years roll on, it becomes more and more clear that Burke was immeasurably the greatest man of his era, and the greatest orator of his own, if not of every other age. Born with that regal presence which stamped him a ruler of men, he could, amid the tumults and convulsions of nations, "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm." Only partially understood, and imperfectly appreciated when living, his fame has extended over both hemispheres, and his works are now the political classic of the English tongue. The statesmen who are most

distinguished for liberality and grasp of thought, make his writings and speeches the subject of their deepest and most reverential study ; and in the halls of legislation, where the English language is uttered, no other authority is so often quoted as that of the Irish statesman. In his private life spotless ; in his public life marked by incorruptible integrity, fearless adherence to the right, and hatred of wrong and oppression, his countrymen may proudly assert that there is not a single dishonouring blot on the fair fame of Edmund Burke.

Our other hero, Goldsmith, was a man of a totally different mould ; a ruler of men's thoughts and feelings too, but in quite another way. We do not look up to him as a great teacher, or profound thinker, but we love the gentle Oliver ; we clasp him to our hearts, with all his errors and failings, as a brother. His fine fancies cheer our lonely hours ; his humour beguiles us out of our sadness, and awakens our sweetest smiles ; his creations people our world of imagination. Oliver Goldsmith has spoken to the universal human heart ; and hence, in hut and hall, all through civilised Europe and America, he has found a kindly welcome. His tender graceful writings have added immensely to the sum of human happiness. Among our bosom-friends, we reckon those charming characters to whom his imagination has given "a local habitation and a name." Their visits at our homes

are welcome as those of angels ; but not “short or far between.” They come not as strangers nor unawares. In “life’s morning march,” we make their acquaintance, and they accompany us to the close. Who has not spent some happy evenings with that most beautiful creation of English fiction, the “Vicar of Wakefield ;” of which Sir Walter Scott finely said, “we read it in youth and in age ; we return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature?” And how striking to find a greater than Scott—one of the kings of modern literature—the great and wise Goethe, sitting as a scholar at the feet of the simple-hearted Irishman, and owning his obligations to this charming tale. Goethe writes thus :—“It is not to be described, the effect that Goldsmith’s ‘Vicar’ had upon me just at the critical moment of mental development. That lofty and benevolent irony,—that fair and indulgent view of all infirmities and faults,—that meekness under all calamities,—that equanimity under all changes and chances, and the whole train of kindred virtues, whatever names they bear, proved my best education ; and in the end, these are the thoughts and feelings which have reclaimed us from all the errors of life.” Nor did Goethe’s estimate of the “Vicar” alter as years increased. At the age of eighty-one, on the brink of the grave, he told a friend that he had recently, with unabated delight, “read

the charming book again from beginning to end, not a little affected by the lively recollection of how much he had been indebted to the author, seventy years before." Is not this true fame? Nay, is not this an attribute of genius—the ability to charm alike the simplest and the sagest—the child and the philosopher? For, in truth, while Goldsmith had a word for the learned and wise, he had that deep true love for humankind—that all-embracing benevolence, which made him the people's poet and teacher, and enabled him to strike those notes that thrill the hearts of all. Even Burns, Beranger, and Elliot, in their most impassioned songs, have never surpassed these noble lines:—

“ Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.”

No two men could be more strongly contrasted than Burke and Goldsmith;—the former, far-seeing, stately, dignified, self-denying, laborious, proud; the latter, gay, impulsive, thoughtless, defective in foresight and plodding industry. From a situation of obscurity, Burke fought his way to renown, with a decision that never faltered, and a self-reliance that nothing could turn aside; and, at his death, the son of the Dublin attorney had achieved a proud position

among the greatest and noblest in the land. Goldsmith, after a terrible struggle with poverty, misery, and neglect, came out at last victorious; was recognised and welcomed by the chosen few as a man of genius; but, after a brief day of sunshine, the clouds gathered, and in the prime of life, with vast possibilities within his reach, he sank under a heavy burden of toil and care. Many were his foibles and failings; but through all the hard battle he never lost the simplicity of his noble nature, and, though fighting at terrible odds with the world's contumely, malignity, and envy, he preserved his honest boy-heart to the close. In this address I have ventured to link these two men together, though so dissimilar in character, because they were born at the same time and in the same land,—because, in going through life, they were often in contact,—and because they found a sphere of activity in the same metropolis. You will not expect from me, in a brief lecture, anything like a detailed account of their lives or labours. I can only attempt to give you some glimpses of the men and their times, which, however imperfect, may help you to form a correct estimate of our heroes, and induce some of you to make a closer study of the subject.

The year 1728 ought to be noted by Irishmen as a memorable one. In that year Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke first saw the light. In the county of Longford there is a small village named Pallas, or

Pallasmore, still so obscure, that few tourists have ever visited the spot. Here, in the year 1728, lived the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a Protestant clergyman of the Established Church. Hood wittily defined a curate as "one who lived *hard* by the church." The description held good in regard to this worthy man. He was

"Passing rich with forty pounds a year."

I rather think there was no great rapture in his household, this year, when a child was born; for the little stranger, who was named Oliver, was the fifth, and when a father, in such circumstances, goes into a committee of ways and means with his wife, and endeavours to solve the hard problem of sustaining a household of seven on an annual revenue of forty pounds, even the most hopeful might feel anxious as to the possibility of keeping the wolf from the door. Very likely, then, the Rev. Charles had some misgivings of this kind, when, for the first time, he looked into the very red face of his little boy, as he nestled close to the bountiful fountain kind Nature had provided for him. Little did the father imagine that this small fraction of humanity was to transmit his own name to the love and admiration of coming generations, and that, as the pastor of the "Deserted Village," and the original of the good "Vicar of Wakefield," he should be "welcomed with laughter, love, and tears," by myriads of men. Yet so it

proved: it was his own kind-hearted father that Oliver painted in these genial, world-renowned characters. It was fortunate for this little scion of the Goldsmith stock that, two years after his birth, by a lucky turn in the wheel of fortune, his father was promoted to a better living, and his income of forty raised to two hundred pounds a year. Oliver's prospects, in regard to nourishment for body and mind, were thus much brightened. The family removed from Pallasmore to a respectable house near the pretty village of Lissoy, in the county of Westmeath. An old dame was employed to teach Oliver the first steps of knowledge, but her efforts did not come to much, as may be gathered from the verdict she pronounced on her pupil, that he was "impenetrably stupid." Thomas Byrne, an old soldier who kept a school in Lissoy, next tried his hand on the boy; but, however good at "shouldering a crutch and shewing how fields were won," I fear he was not very adroit at "teaching the young idea how to shoot." It was at this period of his life that the first of a long train of misfortunes happened to Oliver. The small-pox seized him, brought him to the brink of the grave, and left his face deeply scarred and seamed for life. This was no light calamity; it made his features, never very handsome, positively ugly, and rendered a shrinking, sensitive boy, a butt for heartless ridicule. But, happily, Nature had endowed him

with a sweetness of disposition and a cheerfulness of temper that all the world's scorn and ill usage could never mar. When eight years of age he was sent to a superior school in Roscommon, where he remained till his eleventh year. Here, then, we leave him for the present, to look after our other hero.

It was on the 12th of January, in the year 1728, that Edmund Burke was born. His birthplace was Arran Quay, in the city of Dublin. His father was an attorney, in good practice and rather prosperous circumstances ; but owing to an irascible temper, his clients gradually got fewer, and his business declined. In fact, the choleric temper of the paternal Burke made him, at times, hard and overbearing, and his home can hardly be described as genial or happy. Still, as far as money could smooth the rugged path of life, little Ned had a much brighter out-look than his contemporary Oliver. Burke the elder had made some money by his profession, and he resolved that his second son, Edmund, should be a lawyer. His family consisted of three sons and one daughter, who were trained with much more worldly wisdom, and a keener eye to success in life, than the children of the easy-tempered, good-natured, unthrifty Charles Goldsmith, whose heart and purse were open to all comers, notwithstanding that his slender and uncertain income had now to sustain eight children.

Several of Burke's biographers have laboured industriously to find a place for his now famous name in the peerage, vainly hoping to add to his renown by discovering for him a patrician descent. Hence the attempts to connect the plain attorney of Arran Quay with the noble family of the De Burghs of the Pale. The process is very simple: drop the prefix "De," and change the two final consonants of Burgh into *ke*, and De Burgh at once becomes Burke. Had there been any foundation for such a claim, the acute attorney at the head of the family would not have failed to put it forward, for we have all a little weakness—and Irishmen most of all—about "good blood" and an illustrious pedigree. It is due to Edmund Burke to state that he never was guilty of the silly folly of trying to connect himself with the patrician De Burghs. He had too much good sense and self-respect to lay claim to a nobler lineage than he was fairly entitled to. Truly has Tennyson sung:—

"Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent,
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good :
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

Macknight, the latest and best biographer of Burke,

renounces the De Burgh theory, and deduces the pedigree from a Burke who had once been mayor of Limerick. However that may be, the father of Edmund was a Protestant; his mother, a woman of some culture and deep sensibility, from whom he seems to have inherited his genius, as he derived his irritability from his father, was a Catholic—a member of the Nagle family, of Castletown Roche, in Cork. Mrs Burke never abandoned the religion of her fathers; but her distinguished son adhered to his father's faith, and was, throughout life, a sincere member of the Church of England. Thus he who was afterwards to become one of the wisest of Ireland's emancipators—one of the most eloquent pleaders for the redress of her grievances—had, on his mother's side, Catholics for his ancestors; and was thus bound by the strong ties of kindred to a race then sorely oppressed. Not only so, but some of his early years were passed among his mother's relatives, the Nagles, who had been for centuries adherents of the ancient faith. In Castletown Roche, he spent five years in the heart of the country which Spenser has immortalised in his "*Faerie Queene*." Whether he actually studied this immortal poem amid the scenes in which it was written, we cannot tell; but, at all events, he was here familiarised with the raw material on which the mind of Spenser wrought: he walked by the banks of the Awbeg, the bright Mulla of the *Faerie Queene*;

from the ruins of Kilcolman, once the proud residence of the Desmonds, he gazed on one of the noblest prospects in Ireland; and he stood on the very spots where the great Raleigh and Spenser had so often spent their hours in lofty communings. We cannot doubt that such scenes and associations would enrich his mind with imagery, such as the poet-orator used long after in draping his glowing thoughts. Nor was the society in which he mingled less genial than the scenery. He soon learned to respect and love his maternal relatives for their unostentatious kindness, quick sagacity, and genuine worth; and, in after-years, when he became famous, he often looked back to the period of his residence here as the happiest of his life. Burke's early education was rather neglected, owing to the delicacy of his health; but at the age of thirteen, he had the good fortune to be sent to an excellent school in Ballytore, county Kildare, at the head of which was a Yorkshire Quaker of great worth and ability, named Abraham Shackleton. Here he found a happy home, kind friends, good impulses toward self-improvement, and the best instruction. The friendships he formed with the Shackleton family were only severed by death; and he had reason to regard the day he entered their friendly abode as one of the most fortunate of his life. It was under the fostering care of this teacher that Burke's rare abilities began to develop themselves.

We must now pass over a few years, and change the scene to Trinity College, Dublin. It is the year 1746. In one of the top rooms of the college a youth of eighteen is sitting solitary and moody. He is of a low-sized, thick, robust, ungainly figure. On his countenance is the unmistakable handwriting of small-pox. His forehead, bulging so as to defy all the rules of sculpture, exhibits none of the lines of beauty. Yet is the light of the spirit gleaming brightly through those large, eager eyes, that gaze into vacancy. This unprepossessing youth has got hold of a diamond somewhere, and on the window-pane he scratches the name Oliver Goldsmith. I believe it is there to this day, in the window of room No. 35. Our Trinity student, we see at a glance of his coarse, black, sleeveless gown, and servant's red cap, belongs to the class of sizars, who were poor students, or servitors, whose duty it was to sweep the courts in the mornings, and carry up dishes from the kitchen to the Fellows' dining-hall. For this service their fees were greatly reduced. Our poor Oliver has a forlorn look on his pale, pitted face. It is night, and he lounges out through the college gate, down the dimly-lighted street. A ballad-singer, with a loud, cracked voice, surrounded by a crowd, is roaring out a song. Why does our gowned student stop and listen so eagerly to those discordant notes, as though he were enraptured? The truth is, the ballad is one

of his own composition, the copyright of which he disposed of a few days since for five shillings, glad to get such an addition to his scanty store, and now it is positive happiness to him to watch its reception by a discerning public: to note how some gentle faces soften into smiles,—how the dust-covered artisan, returning from his work, stops and listens, and plunging his hand into his pocket, eagerly invests a penny in the street-ware,—and how the open-mouthed ragged urchin ventures his little all in the purchase. Sweet music this of the old ballad-singer to the ear of the poor sizar. He is drinking in the first intoxicating draughts of applause. He begins to see that a writer may get a public to buy his productions, and so has a glimpse of possible authorship. He returns homeward with a lighter heart, thinking that one day his pen will do greater things than these. Courage, brave heart! a wider and better audience will yet be thine! He is returning to his dull, bare college-room, when a poor starving woman, with five shivering children, crosses his path. Oliver cannot stand the looks and tones of misery. In a moment he is bounding up stairs to his room; he seizes the blankets off his bed, and the poor beggar goes away rich and happy, praying fervently “that the heavens may be his bed.” Bed-time arrives—Oliver looks dolefully at his blanketless bed. Shall he shiver in the cold air all night? Not so. His knife is out in a moment; a slit is made

in the ticking large enough to admit his person ; in among the feathers he creeps, where, in a few moments, he is snoring in the sleep of a good man who has done a virtuous action. Morning dawns ; but Oliver struggles in vain to effect his exit from the feathery envelope, till at length, in response to his outcries, a friendly hand helps to extricate him, presenting, we can fancy, rather a comical figure. This event in the college life of Oliver is attested by the best authority. In it we see the genuine Irishman,—his kind heart, his uncalculating benevolence, and his comical way of meeting a difficulty. Had an Englishman been in a similar predicament, he would have slept in his clothes, I dare say, and made himself pretty tidy and comfortable by placing the feather-bed above him. A Scotchman, I think, would not have parted with his blankets at all, but would have helped the poor outcast in some more reasonable and prudent fashion. Only an Irishman would bestow his blankets in charity, and then cut a hole in the ticking and creep in among the feathers.

Goldsmith's forlorn condition at Trinity College arose from the straitened condition of the home finances. When little over a year at the university, his good father died ; and he became dependent for casual supplies on a kind uncle Contarine, and other relations, who, however willing, had little to spare. No wonder, then, that he was glad to turn an honest

penny in writing ballads—as Homer had done before him. The sizar’s life at Trinity was a hard one,—his position menial,—his privations numberless. Of course, the poor students were looked down upon by the wealthier commoners. The unlucky Oliver, too, got for a tutor an unfeeling, brutal-minded wretch, called Wilder, who never ceased insulting and humiliating him in presence of the class ; for which vile conduct Nemesis has gibbeted his memory before the gaze of posterity. In working out the everlasting sum of things, substantial justice is done in the long run. On one occasion, when Oliver had won a prize of thirty shillings, and, on the strength of this, invited a few friends to a little supper in his room, (contrary to college rules,) this Wilder broke in upon the party when the fun was getting rather “fast and furious,” and knocked down our poor Oliver. But this outrage on one who was as full of love and gentleness as a child, has been amply avenged. All generations shall agree in calling the man who struck that blow, “a brute.” The studies of Trinity were not at all to the mind of Oliver ; and he failed to distinguish himself in any branch of learning. His reading, we may be sure, was of a very miscellaneous character, with a modicum of classics and mathematics, comprising a good deal of history, poetry, and general literature, which, in due time, would be turned to account. At the age of twenty-one he managed to take his degree

of Bachelor of Arts; and then went home to his widowed mother's house in Ballymahon, where, for three years, he led a happy, easy life, to which, in after-years, he looked back with wistful eyes.

Two note-worthy students were in attendance at Trinity College at the same time as Oliver. These were Flood, afterwards the famous parliamentary orator, and Edmund Burke. Neither of them had any acquaintance with Goldsmith. They were fellow-commoners; and doubtless passed by the ungainly sizar with a careless glance. Years afterwards, however, when Burke met Goldsmith at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter, in London, the former declared that he perfectly recollected his fellow-student. I dare say, however, it was simply as an uncommonly odd fish that he remembered the poor shabby sizar. Burke, when attending Trinity, walked every morning from his father's house to the University. Though he had none of the ills of poverty to contend with, he had other trials. His father's temper was not improving with years; and his home was not a happy one. His studies, like those of Oliver, were at this time of a desultory description; and his scholastic attainments rather slender. He was, however, learning to appreciate Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, and Milton; though, strange to say, he never seems to have felt the transcendent superiority of Shakespeare as a poet and

dramatist. Without winning any laurels, he took his Bachelor's degree in 1748; and, being destined for the law, his name was entered at the Inner Temple, London. But his powers were rapidly expanding; and with aspirations above the position of a successful barrister, he turned his face toward the great metropolis. We must now drop the curtain, and suppose a few years to elapse, before it rises on another scene.

It is the year 1757. Our heroes are in their twenty-ninth year. Let us first look up Oliver. It is now five years since he turned his back on dear, delightful, lazy Ballymahon, never more to be gladdened by a sight of its green fields and the kindly faces of its inhabitants. He is now a booksellers' hack, and in vassalage to a certain London publisher named Griffiths, who boards and lodges him, and allows a trifle for clothing. In return for this liberal allowance, he is bound to write six hours a day for the *Monthly Review*, of which Griffiths is editor and proprietor. The dogs of hunger, following hard at his heels, have driven him into this doleful situation. During the last five years he has been a wanderer over Europe. Having spent a short time in Edinburgh, professedly in studying medicine, he has traversed on foot Flanders, Switzerland, Italy, and France. In fact, with the aid of his flute and learning, without any supplies from Ireland, he has made the grand tour. Reaching at length the shores

of England, he has wandered—cold, penniless, and friendless—about the lonely, terrible streets of London. He has tried to practise physic, but failed to get patients or fees. He has been for a time usher in an academy at Peckham, where, it is on record, he was always in advance with his small salary, characteristically spending it on the day he received it, in relief to beggars and in sweetmeats for the younger class, till at length the good-natured wife of the master said, “You had better, Mr Goldsmith, let me keep your money for you, as I do for some of the young gentlemen.” To which he good-humouredly answered, “In truth, madam, there is equal need.” But he has been further down in the social scale than this, having been driven for a time to take refuge among the beggars of Axe Lane. Now, however, he has risen a little in the world, being lodged in Griffith’s attic; and his task is, under the supervision of this man and his wife, to review the new works that are issuing from the press. Look at him as he sits in bondage at the desk, painfully absorbing the contents of the volumes sent in for review,—most of them full of literary rubbish. Suddenly the weary face brightens, and the large eyes are filled with eager interest, as he takes up a thin volume, fresh from the press, entitled, “A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. By Edmund Burke.” This was Burke’s second literary production. He

had already made a great impression by a previous work, entitled, "The Vindication of Natural Society," and at once established his reputation as an eloquent and philosophical writer. Oliver is soon deep in "Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful;" and his criticism of the volume in Griffith's Review is elaborate, honest, well-studied, and such as gave Burke sincere pleasure. As yet the two Irishmen have not met in London. Burke has all but abandoned his law studies, for which he has no taste, and is sailing for wider seas. His father is angry; considers his allowance of £200 a year thrown away; thinks his Ned is going to turn out a useless member of society; and resolves to stop the supplies. And so our Edmund is trying to live by literature, and has rather humble lodgings, up two pair of stairs, over a bookseller's shop, off the Strand. The world is beginning to hear of him. Dr Johnson pronounces his Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful "a model of philosophic criticism;" and David Hume, writing to Adam Smith, says, "An Irish gentleman wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the sublime." The theory propounded in this volume has been exploded long since; but the style, illustrations, and imagery, make the book still worthy of perusal. Soon after its publication, Burke, without profession or prospects, had the courage, like a true Irishman, to marry. The object of his choice was Miss Nugent, daughter of Dr Nugent, a physi-

cian of some note, practising in Bath. This gentleman was a Roman Catholic ; but, according to some accounts, his daughter was brought up a Presbyterian by her mother ; and, as far as I can make out, was, with her husband, an adherent of the Church of England after her marriage. All parties agree in describing her as one of the best of wives. His marriage, which seemed so reckless at the time, was the best step yet taken by Edmund Burke. Macknight, in describing his wife, says, "She glides with Quaker calmness, and an almost saint-like beauty, through the agitating scenes of Burke's daily life, ever soothing his natural irritability by her natural gentleness, standing by his side in moments of despondency, cheering him in poverty, nursing him in sickness, consoling him in sorrow. Whatever may be his future troubles, it is much to remember that at his fireside there is, and will be, peace." In after-years Burke was accustomed to say, "Every care vanishes the moment I enter under my own roof."

Meantime things were going hardly with our poor Oliver, who must have been born with a wooden spoon in his mouth. After some months' labour he broke away from Griffith's harness. The pay was small, the labour heavy, and the diet light. He made several desperate efforts to escape from Grub Street, but destiny had him in hand. He must grind on in the literary mill,—deliverance for him there is none.

How to live is the grand consideration with Oliver, who, as he pathetically expressed it, is "in a garret, writing for bread, and expecting to be dunned for a milk score." In fact, at times, the bread cannot be had, and the milk score cannot be paid. Still, gleams of light are reaching him in his doleful condition. He begins to have more belief in himself. The morning will shortly break, and, for a time, the shadows fly away. The tree must be wounded before it will yield its balm. Through sufferings alone can perfection be reached. Our gentle Oliver bears his trials well; hope never leaves him, nor does sorrow sour his heart. He is the same gentle, kind-hearted being as ever; never so poor as to be unable to assist some one poorer than himself.

Let us look in upon him in his poor, comfortless lodgings in Green Arbour Court, one of the poorest quarters in London, which was approached by the appropriate access of "Breakneck Steps." The room is naked, dirty, and unfurnished. There is but one wooden chair and a window-bench. In this miserable home our forlorn adventurer sits all day long, for his clothes have become too ragged to submit to daylight scrutiny, and he can only venture out at night. We look over his shoulder at the manuscript before him, and what do we see? He is working away at "An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe." A knock at the door is heard; a grave, dignified,

well-dressed personage enters. Oliver hands him the only chair, and takes the window-bench. His visitor is no other than Thomas Percy, a descendant of the ancient Earls of Northumberland, author of "*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*," and afterwards Bishop of Dromore. He has made Goldsmith's acquaintance a few days before, at a coffee-house; and, attracted by something uncommon in the man, has hunted him up in Green Arbour Court. They are just warming into some literary talk, when a timid knock is heard at the door; a poor, little, ragged girl enters, and dropping a curtsy to Oliver, says, "Mamma sends her compliments, and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals," at the same time presenting this singular coal-scuttle to be filled. I have no doubt the good-natured Oliver paused in his learned discourse with this scion of the Percys and complied with the humble request, even though that potful of coals were his last. The "*Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*," produced amid such unpropitious environments, brought Goldsmith into notice, extended his reputation, and, what was of more consequence, secured him employment on some of the periodicals of the day.

At this period Edmund Burke was leading a most laborious life in London. By incessant study he was accumulating those vast stores of knowledge with which, in the House of Commons, he was soon to

astonish his contemporaries. His industry may be judged of from the fact, that soon after the publication of the Treatise already referred to, another work of his in two volumes made its appearance, under the title of "An Account of the European Settlements in America." No sooner was this completed than he commenced "An Abridgment of English History," which, however, was destined to remain a mere fragment, and did not appear till after his death in the quarto edition of his writings. Much more important than either of these were his contributions to the pages of the *Annual Register*, the historical section of which he wrote during several successive years,—a work which secured him £100 a year. He was all the while assiduously cultivating his powers of oratory, by practice in the debating clubs and regular attendance in the gallery of the House of Commons. The athlete was training himself for the arena. Like all great men, he had tremendous powers of industry, and seemed to trust to no mere inspirations of genius, only relying on stern, ceaseless application. This is really the secret of the brilliant triumph with which, a few years after, he startled all England. Truly has it been said, that "excellence is never granted to man but as the reward of labour." Burke, however, was no mere bookworm. He plunged fearlessly "in among the throngs of men," proving himself to be a man of action as well as a student. He found his

way to the drawing-room of the brilliant and accomplished Mrs Montague, one of the most noted patronesses of men of letters. His good-natured countrywoman, Mrs Vesey, one of the leaders of fashionable society, also welcomed him to her assemblies. She is described as having been "as full of Irish frolic and Irish bulls as if she still flourished on the banks of the Liffey." It was this lady who, when inviting a gentleman to one of her balls, called after him, in an off-hand way, "Don't mind your dress; come in your blue stockings,"—an expression which was caught up, and in some unaccountable way applied to a class of ladies who affect literature without any serious grounds for such pretensions.

The most important acquaintance that Burke formed at this period—the one which most influenced his fortunes—was that of William Gerard Hamilton, nick-named "Single-speech," from the fact of his having made one very brilliant speech in the House of Commons, and, through fear of losing his reputation, never opening his lips for years afterwards. Indolence, however, had perhaps more to do with this than timidity. Hamilton was the son of the first Scottish lawyer who pleaded at the English bar. His mind was highly cultivated, his taste fastidious, his natural abilities very considerable. His moral qualities, however, were far below his intellectual. Without positive convictions, he was swayed chiefly by consi-

derations of expediency or selfishness. Cold-hearted, though brilliant, he could stoop to mean and base actions. Self-seeking and unprincipled, craft and deception were his favourite weapons. He attracted many admirers and flatterers, but no friends. This was the man to whom, strangely and unhappily, Edmund Burke was led to attach his fortunes for some years. Hamilton was acute enough to discover Burke's great powers, and hoped to turn them to account for his own selfish ends. Accordingly, when the Earl of Halifax was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and Hamilton Chief Secretary, the latter managed to engage Burke's services, and took him to Dublin. This was Edmund's first step in the political world; and we can fancy with what pride and pleasure he now returned to the place of his birth, as confidential friend and adviser of the Chief Secretary of Ireland. Though a nondescript, yet was he an effective member of the administration, and took up his abode in the vice-regal precincts of Dublin Castle. After eleven years of hard struggling, a glimpse of good fortune at length appeared. He was just in time to be reconciled to his father, and to close his eyes in death. No more would the old attorney be exasperated by the waywardness and imprudence of his son. Hamilton proved, on the whole, an able Chief Secretary. Laying aside his indolence and timidity, he delivered some splendid orations in the Irish House

of Commons. As yet Ireland had no orators in her legislative halls; and it is rather curious that this Scot should have been the first to blow into a flame the brilliant fire of Irish oratory, which afterward flamed so high in Flood, Grattan, and O'Connell. The Parliament of those days, in Ireland, was not the lively, boisterous, rollicking assembly it afterwards became, when it attained legislative independence,—when its debates were marked by that fire, fun, and lightning-wit peculiar to the Green Isle,—when that dear, delightful Sir Boyle Roche awoke such peals of merriment by his charming, immortal blunders. It was he who, on one occasion, in the ardour of his patriotism, exclaimed energetically, “Sir, I would give up half, nay, the whole of the constitution, to preserve the remainder.” It was he who, in the exuberance of his loyalty, described that remarkable performance in gymnastics, when he declared that he “stood prostrate at the feet of his sovereign.” It was he who stood up for the proper dimensions of the quart bottle, and proposed to Parliament that it should be made compulsory that “every quart bottle should contain a quart.” It was Sir Boyle Roche who first introduced to public notice that charming but slightly-confused metaphor when addressing the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, he exclaimed, “Sir, I smell a rat—I see him floating in the air—but, mark me, I shall yet nip him in the bud.”

Not less remarkable was his reply to a member who had protested against burdening posterity by a loan : "What, Mr Speaker! and so we are to beggar ourselves for fear of vexing posterity! Now, I would ask the honourable gentleman, and *this still more* honourable House, why we should put ourselves out of the way to do anything *for posterity*: for what has *posterity* done for us?" A roar of laughter following, Sir Boyle, apprehending that he had been misunderstood, begged leave to explain, "that by posterity he did not at all mean our ancestors, but those who were to come immediately after them."

The Irish Parliament, in Burke's time, was more dignified and stupid than what it became afterwards in the days of Grattan, which Hallam, a most competent judge, describes as "a period fruitful of splendid eloquence, and of ardent though always uncompromising patriotism." Burke's position, behind the scenes, gave him excellent opportunities of observing the real condition of Irish affairs. It was now that he who, years afterwards, was to arraign Warren Hastings for cruelties in India, acquired that horror of the atrocious penal laws that then disgraced the statute-book of Ireland, which rendered him, to the end of his days, the earnest advocate of their repeal, and the champion of his native land. There is little difference of opinion now, among thinking men, regarding the penal code of those days. The most

bigoted and prejudiced shrink from defending it ; the most liberal and enlightened deplore the wrongs and woes that it inflicted, and the widespread ruin that it caused. The real design of those penal enactments, of which we are now so thoroughly ashamed, was not the preservation of the Protestant religion, but the spoliation and abject humiliation of a conquered, hated, dreaded race. No code of laws could be more ingeniously devised, to secure such ends,—to break the national spirit, to destroy energy and self-reliance, and to accumulate riches and power in the hands of a dominant class. Happily these disgraceful laws have long since been swept from the statute-book ; and justice and liberality now dictate the administration of Irish affairs. Burke had collected materials for an elaborate work on the penal laws ; but other engagements diverted his mind from the undertaking. An incomplete fragment, which appeared as a posthumous tract, is the only result of his labours in this direction. When Hamilton went out of office, Burke returned with him to London, and finally quarrelled with his patron, threw up a pension of £300 per annum he had procured for him ; and, getting some insight regarding the real character of the man, quitted all connexion with “ Single-speech ” for ever. The conditions he found attached to his pension were degrading ; and the high-minded, honourable man flung it to the winds in scorn, and pre-

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served his independence. An ugly spectre was thus removed from the path of our hero. Hamilton was no more to influence his destiny.

It is about this time, when Burke and Goldsmith were in their thirty-fifth year, that we find them companions in the literary circles of London. Not yet had Burke got solid ground to stand upon. He had returned to the *Annual Register*, and was eking out a living by his pen. Goldsmith's reputation was steadily on the increase; but, as yet, he was regarded merely as a clever essay-writer. Somewhere or other, probably at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the two Irishmen met; and speedily recognising, with the freemasonry of genius, the genuine worth of each other, formed a friendship that was only broken by death. Both had a hard battle before them—to win fame and a position, in the teeth of prejudice and dislike, with nothing to rely on but their own stout hearts and clear heads. The Literary Club was now flourishing, with the famous Dr Johnson at its head. Burke and Goldsmith were among the chosen nine who constituted the original membership. Very charming must those ambrosial evenings have been, when the club sat in the Turk's Head Tavern. Not in the proudest drawing-room in London—not in all broad England, was there such society, or such conversation, as when Johnson, Garrick, Reynolds, Langton, and our two Irish heroes met around the social

board. The talk there was worth listening to. May the turf lie light on the breast of the Scottish Boswell, who has preserved for us such a vivid picture of the famous men whose wit and wisdom sparkled and flowed at the meetings of the Club! We can still fancy the unwieldy form of Dr Johnson in the chair, rolling his huge head from side to side, as he roared out his opinions, in his rough, dictatorial, bow-wow manner, that drowned all other voices, and made him such "a tremendous companion," as one put it who had suffered from his cataracts of talk. We can still enjoy that scene where his hearty contempt for Scotland came out so strongly. Some one had remarked that Scotland had, at least, a great many noble wild prospects. "Yes," roared the dictator; "Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England." We can fancy how heartily Goldsmith and Burke joined in the roar of applause which, Boswell tells us, followed this "palpable hit" against Scotland. No member of the Club was able to cope with Johnson as a talker, except Burke. At times the great doctor was impatient that Burke did not sit quiet, and submit to be pumped into like a bucket, as his own copious talk flowed on like a river, and with as little prospect of

running dry. But Burke's rich streams of thought would overflow in eloquent words; and his powerful, sonorous voice was able even to out-roar the great Samuel. In one endowment, it must be admitted, Johnson surpassed Burke—the possession of a rich and genial humour. Years afterwards Johnson summed up his opinion of Burke's social and conversational powers thus:—"What I most envy Burke for is his being constantly the same. He is never what we call humdrum; never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you. His stream of mind is perpetual. I cannot say he is good at listening." (There are limits to human endurance in this exercise, O learned doctor!) "So desirous is he to talk, that if one is speaking at the end of the table, he'll speak to somebody at the other end." (Perhaps to crown thy bow-wow, O Samuel!) "Burke, sir, is such a man, that if you met him for the first time in the street, where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.' Now, you may be long enough with me without finding anything extraordinary." (Modestly and generously spoken, doctor!) Goldsmith, who was only great with the pen, said of Burke's conversation,

“He winds into a subject like a serpent.” What fine things Burke could throw out in these flashes of conversation, may be judged of by a specimen. Boswell had remarked of some writer that he had successfully imitated Johnson’s style: “No, no,” said Burke, “it is not a good imitation of Johnson. It has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength.” Then, after a pause, “it has all the contortions of the Sibyl without the inspiration.” On another occasion, some one endeavoured to apologise for one of Johnson’s fierce onslaughts by calling it “a rebuke of the righteous—an excellent oil which breaks not the head.” Burke drily corrected the speaker, by suggesting that, in this instance, it should be called “oil of vitriol.” Nothing could surpass this quiet hit against what Miss Anna Seward called “the wit and aweless impoliteness of the stupendous creature that bore down every one before it.” Even Johnson’s laugh was of the boisterous, overpowering order, and was compared by some one, who must have had a profound acquaintance with natural history, to the laugh of a rhinoceros. Boswell describes it as resounding, in their midnight wanderings, from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch. But, with all his roughness, Johnson’s friends loved him heartily for his many noble qualities. As he grew older, he became more tolerant and less overbearing. “I am more candid,”

he said at a later period, "than when I was younger. As I know more of mankind, I expect less of them, and am ready now to call a man a *good man* upon easier terms than I was formerly." This reminds us of Burke's fine saying, that from all the large experience he had had, he had learned to think *better* of mankind. Goldsmith's conversational powers were by no means equal to those of Burke or Johnson. He failed often, not from want of power, but from a want of coolness and self-possession, and from a tendency to utter thoughtlessly whatever came uppermost in his mind. He disregarded the golden rule, "When you have nothing to say, say nothing." His nature was over-sensitive for the rough wit-combats of those intellectual gladiators. Yet there was no man whose company was more relished, or who was more entirely loved by those who knew him intimately. And, after all, the fragments of his talk that have floated down to us are far from justifying the satirical remark, "that he talked like poor Poll." Nothing could be happier than his allusion to the pomposity of Johnson's style, "If *you* were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like *whales*." Talking with fluent vivacity on one occasion, he was stopped in the middle of a sentence by his hearer exclaiming, on seeing Johnson roll himself as if about to speak, "Hush! hush! Dr Johnson is going to say something." "And are you sure you'll comprehend

what he says?" was Goldsmith's happy retort. Of some one he said, "He has only one fault, but that is a thumper." In fact, it is very evident that Goldsmith's conversation was very far from being the silly twaddle it is sometimes represented. Doubtless, from being at times over-ambitious, he fell short of his mark. Not unjustly did Johnson say, "Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation; he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails." But we must leave this pleasant Club. We love the great and good Johnson for his own noble qualities. We love him especially for his kindness to the simple-hearted Oliver. Never did our gentle, sensitive poet cast himself in vain on that great, strong heart for sympathy or help. And among the friendly voices that cheered Edmund Burke when entering on his great career, none was more hearty and honest than that of Samuel Johnson. They are all gone,—Club and tavern melted into air. As Carlyle puts it, "The becking waiter who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence, and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The bottles they drank out of are all broken, the chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very knives and forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the in-

discriminate clay. All, all has vanished, in very deed and truth, like the baseless fabric of Prospero's vision." Yes, gone! and yet not wholly gone. For by the magic power of a book we can still summon them before us, and listen to the pompous roll of Johnson's periods, the eloquent words of Burke, and the spontaneous overflowings of Goldsmith's well-stored mind. We can enter the club-room once more, and, in imagination, re-people it with the historic forms whose merriment made its walls re-echo, and whose shadows seem to linger round the ruins still. Though dead, they still speak to us, and their memory can never pass away.

LECTURE THE SECOND.

EDMUND BURKE AND OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

PART SECOND.

AT the time when Goldsmith was attending the weekly meetings of the Club, he was toiling laboriously with the pen ; and by voluminous contributions to the periodicals of the day he managed to earn a modest competence. His improvident habits often brought him much suffering ; but his difficulties failed to teach him any worldly wisdom. It was under the pressure of one of these pecuniary difficulties that he gave to the world his fine tale of " The Vicar of Wakefield." Every one is familiar with the story,—how a hard-hearted landlady arrested him for debt ; how he sent an imploring message to Johnson, who came at once, and found Goldsmith in a towering passion, his landlady grim and unrelenting, and a professional gentleman in attend-

ance in the capacity of bailiff ; how poor Oliver, driven to extremities, took out of his desk the manuscript of "The Vicar," over which he must have spent many long, happy hours, and handed it to Johnson, who there and then sat down to its perusal, the bailiff looking on the queer scene in a kind of calm astonishment ; how the doctor, satisfied regarding the intellectual flavour of the article, hurried away to a bookseller, and returned, triumphant and breathless, with sixty pounds, the product of the sale ; and then how Oliver paid his rent, and gave the heartless landlady a tremendous "blowing up," and, it is to be hoped, made her heartily ashamed of her conduct. The bookseller who was lucky enough to obtain such a bargain kept the manuscript by him for nearly two whole years before he ventured on publication. But in the same desk from which its author drew out "The Vicar," there lay a richer treasure still, a higher and rarer product of genius,—his fine poem, "The Traveller," which for years he had been beating out and polishing with anxious care. Soon after, he parted with his interest in it for twenty guineas—such was the wretched remuneration of literary labour in those days. It won him, however, what gold could not buy—the laurel wreath of the true poet. Soon the welcome murmurs of applause gladdened poor Oliver's heavy heart. Johnson pronounced it "the finest poem that had appeared since the death

of Pope." When he read it aloud in Reynolds's drawing-room, the painter's sister exclaimed, "I shall never more think Dr Goldsmith ugly." No wonder that Charles James Fox, after reading it, declared, "It is one of the finest poems in the English language;" or that the classic Langton should have said, "There is not a bad line in 'The Traveller.'" The easy flow of the verse, the exquisite finish of the diction, the graceful tenderness and harmony,—above all, the direct, irresistible appeal to the heart,—are the charms that render "The Traveller" so universally captivating. How some of the lines linger on the ear and in the memory with a soft, mellow flow!—

"And learn the luxury of doing good."

"Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home."

"But winter lingering chills the lap of May."

"The land of scholars and the nurse of arms."

"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law."

"Where the broad ocean leans against the land."

How fine the picture of the Swiss!—

"Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more."

"The Traveller" at once and for ever established Goldsmith's fame, and made him hundreds of friends. The laurel crown was won. The poor adventurer of

Ballymahon now found himself welcomed and applauded by the noblest and best.

Now, too, for Burke the hour of victory had arrived, and thick and fast the honours were showered upon him. By the kindness of a kinsman he was introduced to the Marquis of Rockingham, who, speedily recognising his great powers, made him his private secretary. Soon after, he obtained the position of member of Parliament for the borough of Wendover, near the foot of the Chiltern Hills. It was the time of close boroughs, and it was Lord Verney's influence that obtained him the seat. His great, stormy future was opening. On the 27th of January 1766, Burke rose in the House of Commons to deliver his maiden speech. It was a great and important occasion. The American Colonies had risen in fierce wrath against the Stamp Act, and the first mutterings were heard of a storm that was to end in revolution and final dismemberment. The Colonies had banded together, and now, for the first time, came before Parliament in a federal capacity. Already their discontents foreshadowed rebellion. Pitt, in his place in Parliament, had applauded the rising spirit of the colonists, little dreaming where it was to end; and had uttered the famous words, "I rejoice that America has resisted"—words which were speedily wafted to every American home, and read with exultation, and welcomed as an acknowledgment of the justice of their

cause, and their right to strike against wrong, by the foremost of British statesmen. Intense was the interest then, when, on the evening of the 27th of January 1766, a petition from a body calling themselves the American Congress was presented in the House of Commons. A stirring debate arose; the courtiers resisted the admission of such a document, as subversive of the authority of the Commons of England. It was known that Burke would address the House for the first time. As his noble, commanding figure arose, dear friends in the gallery looked down upon him with hearts anxiously throbbing for his success. Two of his countrymen were there—the keen-eyed Arthur Murphy, and the affectionate Oliver Goldsmith; and Samuel Johnson, in a neighbouring tavern, awaited the result. The success of the new member was complete. The astonished auditory listened to a speech in which weighty argument, and vast and varied information, were clothed in gorgeous and harmonious periods, discovering at once strength of reasoning powers, splendour of imagination, and boundless mastery over language. That great assembly listened at first with bursts of applause, then in rapt attention and admiration; and when Burke sat down, the aspirations of years of toil were realised; his reputation as an orator and statesman was established. Pitt rose, and warmly and generously eulogised the speaker, congratulat-

ing the Ministry on their valuable acquisition. As Burke returned to his home on that January night, he felt, no doubt, the honest exultation of a man who, by patience, fortitude, and dauntless toil, has attained a noble end. Without stumble or failure, he had at once taken a place in the front rank of parliamentary orators. "Sweet are the uses of adversity;" bracing to the whole man is the ascent of "the hill Difficulty;" but, as Burke himself afterwards declared, there are occasions on which sunshine is one of the most joyous things on earth. Only a week after the delivery of his first speech, he astonished and delighted the House by a second still more brilliant, in which he boldly crossed weapons with the great Pitt himself, surpassing the popular idol in the highest qualities of parliamentary eloquence. We can fancy how rapturously Goldsmith and the other members of the Club received the news of his triumph. The old literary dictator, however, was in no degree astonished. When some one professed to wonder at what had happened, Johnson exclaimed, "Sir, there is no wonder at all. We who know Mr Burke know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Writing to a friend soon after, he said, "Burke has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. His speeches have filled the town with wonder." Such, indeed, was the fact. The orator had fairly taken the House by

storm. All ranks and ages, able men and less able men, veteran politicians and young members, were alike enraptured with his orations. Far from being intoxicated or rendered indolent by success, Burke regarded his first victory as but a stepping-stone to still greater triumphs. His labours redoubled ; and feeling that now he had entered on his proper vocation, he conscientiously set to work, to qualify himself for the highest duties of statesmanship, by a thorough study of the vast and complicated interests of the British empire and the functions of Government. He did not aim at being a mere glittering rhetorician, who could dazzle an audience by the brilliancy of his periods, nor a mere keen swordsman in debate, adroit in discovering the weak points of an adversary, and sure and rapid in the home-thrust. He soared higher. He aimed at mastering the profound philosophical principles by which government should be guided, as well as the complicated details of administration. All the powers of his great intellect were now bent in this direction ; and how complete was his acquaintance with the foreign policy, the revenue, the trade and commerce of the empire, his after-career as a statesman furnishes conclusive evidence. In the dispute between England and her American Colonies, which was every day becoming more threatening, he advocated a moderate, conciliatory, but dignified course ; and opposed, with all the

might of his eloquence and energy, that mad policy by which an infatuated monarch and imbecile statesmen drove the colonists into revolt. Had his suggestions been listened to, England might have been spared the shame and humiliation of defeat, and the loss of her fairest possessions. Throughout the whole transactions of this stormy period, when the fortunes of England were often at the lowest ebb, Burke's course was marked by thorough integrity and enlightened patriotism. Never was he found cringing to men in office, or bartering principle for preferment; and while true to his party, of which indeed he was the animating spirit, he never sacrificed the honour or interests of his country on the altar of faction. In a corrupt, venal age, amid scenes that lowered and disgraced the public men of England, Burke was conspicuous for spotless integrity and unflinching patriotism. Fearless were his rebukes of wickedness, even when it occupied the highest seats; scathing his exposures of political corruption; in the cause of freedom, truth, and right, he was ever found battling bravely. While mingling in the thick of party conflicts he shared in none of the contamination, profligacy, and falsehood that abounded on all hands; and preferred exclusion from office and honours to dishonest gains and rapacious servility.

Goldsmith was at this time basking in a little sunshine, as well as his illustrious friend. A few days

after Burke's maiden speech had electrified the metropolis, "The Vicar of Wakefield" was published. "The Traveller" had reached a fourth edition, and was every day widening the reputation of its author. "The Vicar," on its appearance, did not take the town by storm,—was ushered into existence by no flourish of trumpets. The leading Reviews scorned to notice such a trumpery production. Some of the leaders of taste remarked that it taught nothing, and that they could make nothing of it. Even Johnson thought he had made a good bargain when he sold the copyright for sixty pounds. Burke alone, of all the members of the Club, appreciated its sweetness, simplicity, and pathos; and welcome to the author's ear must have been his approving verdict. But the response of the public was truer than the voice of the critics. The little tale, which was destined to confer an undying reputation on the writer, slowly made its way; but every year since its appearance it has been widening the circle of its readers. Even before his death, Goldsmith saw it reach the sixth edition, and heard of its translation into several continental languages. We have seen how German Goethe welcomed it, and how it gave the first decided impulse to the intellect that was to create "Faust." Vast has been the employment supplied by the little tale to the busy fingers of printers, binders, and papermakers since it was first set up in type; countless the thousands of pounds it has poured into

the coffers of the booksellers during the last hundred years. Even so,—the starving author may supply multitudes with the means of earning their bread; may influence not only the thoughts of men, but their commerce, and arts, and manufactures; and penniless himself, the productions of his genius may prove an inexhaustible mine of wealth to others. Who could reckon up the editions of “*The Vicar*” which the press has thrown off since the year 1766, or estimate the myriads of admiring readers that have laughed and wept over its pages? The foremost of our artists,—our Wilkies, Stothards, Leslie, Maclises, and Mulready,—have tasked their genius in embodying its creations on their canvas. Far from losing its popularity, as years roll on it comes with a fresh charm to each new generation of readers, and is continually appearing in bright and brighter glories of the printer’s, binder’s, and engraver’s art. But then, who can pretend to calculate its moral results,—the sweet and gentle charities it has breathed into thousands of hearts; the fretful impatience it has soothed or smiled away; the sympathies for the fallen, the outcast, the lost it has awakened; the tolerance of human frailty and the love of humankind it has called forth; the lonely hours of pain and sadness, of restlessness and depression, it has brightened? We can hardly fancy a bad man reading the sweet story without having his better nature awakened, at least for a moment, in

response to such a picture of innocence and purity as the Primrose family group. Who does not know them all round? Who does not love the vicar himself,—so brave, and yet so simple and childlike,—so meek, so true, and good? Who does not sympathise with the good man, who was “by nature an admirer of happy faces,” in his original method of getting rid of a troublesome guest by lending him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value? “and I always,” observes the kind man, “had the satisfaction of finding that he never came back to return them.” The whole family are our friends and neighbours;—the loyal wife, so proud of her gooseberry wine and her husband; Moses, the sage simpleton, with his memorable bargain of the green spectacles; the girls, “a glory and a joy;” and Dick and Bill, without whom the charming group would have been incomplete. I cannot help thinking that the period when Goldsmith was engaged in the composition of this tale, when his brain was teeming with these fine creations, and, in fancy, he must have been often revisiting the parsonage at Lissoy, and wandering among its green fields and by its bright streams, may be reckoned among his happiest hours, notwithstanding his privations. It is a transcript of his own heart and experience, and therefore goes direct to the heart of all. Not only has it immensely added to our stock of good humour, but conferred on its author a kind of

human immortality on earth. He has spoken to three generations; and it would be difficult to name any work that is more likely to hold its place in the hearts of men. Who would not say, on closing the book, "Oh that Goldsmith had enriched literature with many more such creations!"

Only a few more incidents in the life of Oliver Goldsmith can be glanced at. Though his character as a writer was now established, he had still to carry on his literary toils in the presence of threatening want. No doubt "it is sweet to win one's laurels by blood or ink;" but our Oliver's laurels brought him little pecuniary gain, and an empty stomach is an inexorable creditor. Yet, now that he is no longer troubled with doubts as to his proper vocation, and has his work before him, he struggles on manfully, and never dropped the oar of labour till death struck it from his grasp. "Think of me," he exclaimed pathetically to a friend, "that must write a volume every month." How marvellous that this homeless man, without the assistance of a friendly hand, writing so rapidly to procure the daily bread, should have written so well, and left on all he did the signet mark of genius! It was at this period that he first thought of writing for the stage—the most remunerative description of literary labour. His first venture was the comedy of "The Good-natured Man," which met a favourable reception, and brought him in four

hundred pounds, the largest sum he had ever been in possession of, and which, to him, must have seemed inexhaustible. He at once proceeded to get rid of it by purchasing and furnishing rooms in the Inner Temple; and from this date commenced a system of waste and debt that involved him in difficulties, from which he was only released by death. He had now another poem on the anvil; but while he threw off his prose productions rapidly, he bestowed the most elaborate care on his poems, as though he felt that he was writing for immortality. It is known that the writing and revision of this poem—"The Deserted Village"—extended over two whole years. With what accuracy, during these months, he must have polished the verses of this precious poetical gem, weighing every word and phrase, pruning all exuberance, and filling in the minute details of the lovely picture! Only the pure beaten gold remained, without alloy or imperfection. It is a poem of the heart, and the heart guards it alike from criticism and analysis. A loftier niche must be awarded to it than to "The Traveller." The sympathies it awakens are wider and deeper; its tenderness and pathos reach all hearts; in profound human interest it is unsurpassed. Like a noble piece of Greek sculpture, in which we can detect nothing superfluous, nothing wanting,—the marble seeming to glow with life,—the poem contains nothing but pure poetry; and though

limited in its range, and covering but a few pages, it has on it the stamp of immortality. One oft-quoted passage I cannot but quote once more,—it never palls. It is a picture of the poet's own longings, amid his sore toils in the din and roar of London,—aspirations, alas! never to be realised :—

“ In all my wanderings through this world of care,
In all my griefs,—and God has given my share,—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose :
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to shew my book-learn'd skill ;
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.”

No wonder that Gray, author of “The Elegy,” then spending the last summer of his life, should have exclaimed, on listening to “The Deserted Village,” “*This man is a poet!*” No wonder that Goethe hailed its appearance with rapture, or that Edmund Burke should have declared that its pastoral images surpassed the efforts of Pope and Spenser.

Four more years of toil, enjoyment, and sorrow yet lay before our Oliver. His second poem at once leaped into popularity. In three months it reached a fifth edition ; but in hard cash it brought its author

only a small amount. His brain and pen had no rest. Abridgments of English, Grecian, and Roman Histories; toils on "Animated Nature;" articles for periodicals; a second comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," more successful than the first; drudgery and depression, with occasional relaxations in the country, and happy evenings at the Club,—these filled up the days of the overtasked man. His careless habits, thoughtless liberality, and entire want of economy, plunged him into debt, and drove him to obtain advances from the publishers on works that were not as yet commenced. Could any condition be more pitiable than that of a man pressed by creditors, and having heavy mortgages on the unborn productions of his brain? "Staggering under a heavy load of debt,"—in dread of the bailiff,—pursued by a host of needy dependents, to whom he could not say "No,"—oppressed by the prospect of the weary drudgery that lay before him, the heart of our poor "author militant" must have been often sad indeed. Still he scorned to complain; kept his griefs confined to his own bosom; never spoke of his difficulties to his great friends, who would doubtless have helped him had they known his distress. It was at this period, just when the clouds were gathering that were soon to end in darkness and night, that the following touching incident occurred. At an evening party, amid the din of conversation, music, and gaiety, the trembling,

cracked voice of a poor woman attempting to sing a ballad in the street, reached the ear of Goldsmith. The notes of woe struck a responsive chord in his own aching heart. He rushed from the room, gave the poor sobbing creature his little all, and went back to the scene of pleasure with a lighter heart. We may be sure too, that, with the shillings, he gave some kind words of hope and cheer that would brighten the darkness of the outcast for a moment, and double the value of the gift. Speaking of Dean Swift, Thackeray says, "I think I would rather have had a potato and a friendly word from Goldsmith, than have been beholden to the Dean for a guinea and a dinner. He insulted a man as he served him, made women cry, guests look foolish, bullied unlucky friends, and flung his benefactions into poor men's faces. No; the Dean was no Irishman. No Irishman ever gave but with a kind word and a kind heart."

It was just before the closing scene of his life that Goldsmith produced one other poetical gem,—"*Retaliation*,"—a wonderful proof of the versatility of his powers, and a mournful evidence of the unexplored depths of his genius, when he was lost to the world. One more brilliant flash came, and then the darkness rushed down. His friends had been amusing themselves, in his absence, at a dinner party, in writing a series of epitaphs on him, in which his country, his brogue, and his person were objects of wit. I dare

say they meant no harm ; they did not know how sensitive his heart was at that moment, with a weight of untold woe, or they would have spared their shafts of ridicule. The good-humoured, gentle poet was roused to retaliate, not in bitterness or anger,—he had no room for such feelings in his heart,—but in lines which have immortalised their subjects, and proved, in their case, epitaphs more enduring than brass or marble. Wonderful insight into the character of his literary friends, keen satire, marked by good taste and mingled with merited praise, and entire freedom from all malice, are the characteristics of “Retaliation.” With one epitaph only have we to do—the famous one on Burke :—

“ Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it, too much ;
Who, born for the universe, narrow’d his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind. . . .
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit ;
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit. . . .
In short, ’twas his fate, unemploy’d or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.”

Of the justice of this delineation I shall have a few words to say at the close. The verses were still unfinished—in fact, one line in the epitaph on Reynolds was half written—when his last illness “struck the pen from the poet’s hand for ever.” He was in country lodgings, finishing his “Animated Nature,” when seized by a disease which terminated in nervous fever.

His powers had long been over-tasked, and his bodily strength undermined, so that his illness made rapid progress. The troubles of his mind, too, arising from his heavy liabilities, aided the advances of the destroyer. How pathetic that scene, when the poor, lonely man lay tossing, sleepless, night after night, with no mother's, wife's, or sister's soft hand to smooth his pillow, and when the good doctor, finding his prescriptions powerless, put the question, "Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever you have. *Is your mind at ease?*" "No, it is not," was the sad response of the patient; and these were the last words of Oliver Goldsmith. On the morning of the 4th of April 1774, he lay dead, having lived a few months beyond his forty-fifth year. His friends do not seem to have heard of his illness till news of his death reached them. "When Burke was told of it he burst into tears." Reynolds dropped his pencil, stricken by the bitterest grief he had yet known. Johnson mourned his loss with touching tenderness, till he was summoned from the world. Poor women, to whom he had been kind and charitable, crowded the staircase of his rooms, weeping bitterly over the loss of one to whom they never appealed in vain. Burke and Reynolds directed the arrangements for the funeral; and all that was mortal of Oliver Goldsmith was laid in the burial-ground of the Temple Church. Soon after, a noble monument was

erected to his memory, in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, bearing a Latin inscription from the pen of Johnson, in which it is recorded^{*} that "he scarcely left any kind of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn."

Edmund Burke survived his countryman twenty-three years. At the death of Goldsmith, he had little more than entered on his great career. When Oliver was toiling on his "History of Rome," in 1768, and brooding over "The Deserted Village," in his country lodgings on the Edgeware Road, news reached him that Burke had become a landed proprietor, having purchased an estate named *The Gregories*, afterwards *Beaconsfield*, in Buckinghamshire, about twenty-four miles from London. This purchase cost him £23,000. Whence did Burke obtain this large sum? By the death of an elder brother, he had inherited property worth £6000; from some of his relations he borrowed a further sum; the remainder was advanced by the Marquis of Rockingham, who never reclaimed the debt, and cancelled it in a codicil of his will. It was intended as a small acknowledgment of the immense services Burke had rendered to him and to his party. By this purchase, Burke became owner of six hundred acres of land, and a beautiful residence. Here he resided to the close of his life, going up to London only when called by his parliamentary duties. He delighted in a country life; and, by judicious manage-

ment, he speedily tripled the value of his property, and astonished his neighbours and visitors by his improvements. The great advocate of financial reform shewed that his talents were of the practical order, by becoming the most prosperous and successful farmer in Buckinghamshire. His kindness and benevolence made him a universal favourite with the labouring classes, in whose welfare he took much interest, helping them in difficulties, and comforting and doctoring them in sickness. Altogether, his domestic life at Beaconsfield was a beautiful picture of quiet repose, active benevolence, independence, and purity. Gladly did he escape from the smoke of London and the stormy scenes in which he had to mingle, to the pure air and lovely scenery of his beloved Beaconsfield. There, during the parliamentary recess, his "hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed," were busily at work pruning trees, or rooting up weeds; and the mind that could grasp all the multiplied interests of the empire, was directing the operations of harvest. We can still, in fancy, see the great man walking over his fields, followed by his pet lambs, calmly listening to the homely talk of his labourers, calculating the value of his crops, and always diffusing gladness by his presence and cheering words. Old friends and new friends gathered round him in his noble mansion, and were welcomed with the hospitality of a true Irishman. Dr Johnson spent some

happy days at Beaconsfield in the autumn of the very year in which Goldsmith died. We can fancy their tender talk regarding their departed friend,—all his faults forgotten, and only loving, tearful memories of his goodness and worth, his endearing foibles and wonderful genius, filling their minds. How the strong, rough voice of Johnson would tremble with suppressed emotion, and the eyes of Burke would fill with tears as they spoke together of their gentle “Goldy!” Fascinated by the reception he met, and delighted with the ease, comfort, elegance, and peace of his friend’s splendid abode, Johnson took leave at the close of his visit with a Latin quotation, which signified that he “did not envy, but admired.” What a contrast must have met him when he returned to his own dingy lair in Bolt Court! Ten years later, news reached Burke that Johnson was dying. He hastened to town, and found that his friend was sinking rapidly. Several other friends were present; and on Burke expressing a fear lest the presence of so many might be oppressive, Johnson answered, “No, sir, it is not so; and I must be ill indeed when your company would not be a delight to me.” In tears, and with unspeakably tender emotion, the two friends took solemn leave of each other; and in a few days one of the greatest and best of Englishmen had left behind the weakness of the flesh, and assumed the garments of immortality. Burke was one of the pall-

bearers when the mortal remains of Samuel Johnson were committed to the guardianship of the tomb, in England's Walhalla—Westminster Abbey. "He has made a chasm," exclaimed Burke, in the anguish of his grief, "which nothing can fill up." What depths of tenderness there were in these two great souls!

In this brief sketch I do not propose to enter into the parliamentary career of Burke. That belongs to history, and is so inextricably interwoven with the great historical events of his era that it could not be placed in an intelligible light, without entering into details that are quite foreign to a lecture. To be understood, Burke's public career must be studied in connexion with the history of England. He continued to act, throughout his life, with the Rockingham Whigs, of which party he was the commanding genius, and the animating and organising spirit. During the two brief periods when the Whigs were in power, he held office as Paymaster of the Forces; for, to their shame be it recorded, his party rewarded him with no higher appointment, and uniform exclusion from the Cabinet. It was a wretched venal time, when genius had but a poor chance against stupidity and broad acres. "The narrowness of his fortune," said Walpole, complacently, "kept him down." Throughout those years when the American war was dragging its length wearily and disgracefully along,—when the throes of that great moral earthquake, the French

Revolution, were felt, shaking, in their convulsive upheavings, all the thrones of Europe, Burke, in the House of Commons, was pouring forth those grand orations which have immortalised his name, and will be read as long as the English language lasts. Without dwelling on his political pamphlets, which made a profound impression on the public mind,—such as those on “The Present State of the Nation” and “The Causes of the Present Discontents,” the latter teeming with political wisdom, and still influencing the constitutional policy of England,—we may refer to his speeches on “American Taxation” and “American Conciliation,” as noble specimens of his powers. It is in the latter that the splendid vision of the greatness of the British Colonies in America occurs, and that the memorable words, in reference to the ties which should bind the colonies to Britain, are to be found :—“My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government; they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it once be understood, that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another, that these two

things may exist without any mutual relation ; the cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened, and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have ; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience."

Every reader of history knows the effect produced by his speech on "Administrative Reform," delivered in 1780, when his powers had reached their utmost intensity, and his position was most commanding. Most of his admirers point to it as the most finished specimen of his oratory. Its effect, when delivered, was overwhelming. Wit, poetry, imagination lighted up and adorned the most solid reasoning and the profoundest political sagacity ; while vivid appeals to the noblest passions of the soul stirred the hearts of his audience to their very depths. The tumultuous cheers that bore witness to the greatness of this oration were re-echoed throughout the empire, and all Britain resounded with his praise. Even his opponent, Lord North, said that it excelled all that he had ever heard in that House. In grandeur and power, however, even this effort was thrown into the shade

by his speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Every historical student is familiar with that grand spectacle in Westminster Hall, in which Burke was the prominent figure, when the Commons of England arraigned Warren Hastings before the Lords, for high crimes and misdemeanours, and the son of the Dublin attorney arose "to plead the cause of Asia in the presence of Europe." It was the great act of Burke's life. Never before, perhaps, had it fallen to the lot of mortal man to address such an audience. That grand historic hall, "which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings,"—where Charles I. "had confronted the High Court of Justiciary with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame,"—was one blaze of scarlet, and was thronged by all that was most illustrious in the rank and intellect of the British Empire. England's most distinguished statesmen, warriors, and judges formed the court that was to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. The impeachment was directed against an Englishman of great wealth and uncommon powers, who, as Governor-General of India, was charged with acts of cruelty and injustice towards the people of Hindostan. The conductors of the impeachment—Burke, Sheridan, Fox—formed the most illustrious galaxy of orators that England had yet produced. In solemn procession, one hundred and seventy peers,

and three-fourths of the members of the House of Commons, marched to the scene of trial. The grandeur and impressiveness of the scene when Burke rose to commence his great task were almost overwhelming. Macaulay, in his brilliant essay on Warren Hastings, has painted it as only that great word-painter can describe such a scene. He has told us how the Lord Chancellor Thurlow sat enthroned under a rich state canopy, the judges of the land in ermine by his side ; how the prelates of the Church in their lawn-sleeves, and the peers in their robes, composed a venerable throng ; how the queen and peeresses in their brilliant dresses, and a bright galaxy of English beauties, thronged the long galleries ; how the Queen of Tragedy, Mrs Siddons, was conspicuous, "in the prime of her majestic beauty, looking with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage ;" how Gibbon, the historian of the Roman Empire, and Parr, the great classical scholar, and Reynolds, had left their studies to gaze upon the scene. "There, too," he says, "were seated around the queen the fair-haired daughters of the House of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present." Burke's opening oration occupied the sittings of four days ; and, at this distance of time, is still admitted to be one of

the greatest efforts of genius on record, and one of the grandest triumphs of eloquence. As he drew towards the close, and, with the documents of impeachment in his hands, raised as a testimony towards heaven, he detailed the cruelties of the accused, and, with streaming eyes, told how his agents had inflicted unmentionable tortures on innocent women, and scourged children to death in the presence of their parents, and hammered wedges of iron between the corded fingers of poor Hindoo labourers, the agony of the audience could no longer be endured—tears flowed fast—outbursts of sympathetic indignation drowned the voice of the orator—Mrs Sheridan fainted—and the Queen of Tragedy admitted that all stage-effect sank into nothingness in presence of such a scene. Even the accused was seen to turn pale, and Thurlow, for once, shed a tear. “At length,” says Macaulay, “the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded—‘Therefore,’ said he, ‘hath it with all confidence been ordered, by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanours. I impeach him in the name of the Commons House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honour he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and

whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all.' ” The triumph of the orator's art could go no further. Windham, no mean judge of oratory, pronounced this peroration “the noblest ever uttered by man.” Byron has celebrated the event in lines worthy of the great occasion :—

“ When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath—the delegated voice of God,
Which shook the nations through his lips, and blazed,
Till vanquish'd senates trembled as they praised.”

Regarding the issue of this great trial, I can only mention that, after dragging its slow length through seven years, it ended in the acquittal of Warren Hastings. But, though the criminal escaped, such have been the results of that impeachment, that a milder and more righteous policy has been pursued ever since in Britain's Eastern Empire ; and it has never been necessary to impeach another Governor-General of India.

The limits of this lecture, now almost reached, prevent me from referring to Burke's latest works, “Reflections on the French Revolution,” and “Letters on a Regicide Peace ;” and his famous “Letter to a Noble Lord,” published the year before his death.

These productions discovered no traces of decay in his vast powers, and exerted an immense influence over the public mind. In the year 1794 he retired from public life, having served his country as a member of the House of Commons for twenty-eight years. He was a poor man when he entered on his labours, he was a poor man when he closed them; retiring with clean hands, but unrequited for all his toils by place or pension. His only son, Richard, whom he loved with devoted tenderness, and around whom all his hopes now gathered, succeeded him as member for the borough of Malton, Yorkshire, which Burke had represented for many years. Of the abilities of this young man, the fond father cherished the loftiest opinion. He hoped that, in the House of Commons, his son would not only be his successor, but even eclipse his own great fame; and now his heart dilated with joy when he saw him a member of Parliament, and about to commence a ministerial career under Lord Fitzwilliam, the heir of his patron, Lord Rockingham. But these bright hopes, like all his grand projects, were destined to end in dark disappointment. One month after, Richard Burke, the darling object of his hopes and prayers, was cut off by a rapid consumption; and the worn and weary man found himself childless in his old age. The loss of this son, who appears to have been every way worthy of the love his father lavished on him, was a fearful blow to

Burke. At first, his grief was wild and terrible. "He burst forth," says Macknight, "with loud cries; rushed violently into the room where the corpse was lying, and again and again flung himself upon the bed, in the most heart-rending affliction. His poor wife, too, suffered equally, though her grief was not so demonstrative." "For days their dinner hour was unregarded; life, with the two mourners, seemed suspended; nights and days were spent in unavailing sorrow." Time mitigated his sorrow; but from the hour of Richard's death, he was a heart-broken man. Life had lost all its charms. He suddenly became old and infirm, and spoke of himself as one dead. He compared himself to an old oak prostrated by the hurricane. "I am stripped of all my honours," he said; "I am torn up by the roots." How pathetic! From the time of his loss, he never dined from home, avoided all visitors, and wrapped himself in the mantle of his great sorrow. Still, at times, his mind roused itself, and he escaped from his grief for a little, in intellectual labours, or the conversation of old friends. It is pleasant to know that some of the last hours of his life were spent in the perusal of "Wilberforce's Practical Christianity;" and so impressed was he with the piety and excellence of this admirable work, that he sent a message to its author, thanking him for having sent such a book into the world. On the 9th of July 1797, in the 68th year of his age, he calmly expired. His end was peace—

his death that of a Christian ; “in implicit trust,” he said, “in *that* mercy which I have long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which I look forward with a trembling hope.” By his own expressed desire, he was laid by the side of his Richard in Beaconsfield church. Years before, he had said in a letter to a friend, “I would rather sleep in the corner of a little churchyard than in the tomb of all the Capulets.” He obtained his wish. Fox, in the House of Commons, proposed a public funeral, and Westminster Abbey as the resting-place of the great statesman ; but his own injunctions could not be disregarded.

Permit me now to close with one or two remarks of a general character. Of the two men I have been attempting to delineate, Goldsmith is generally regarded as the most thoroughly Irish. In his thoughtlessness regarding to-morrow, in his inability to take care of money, in dearly earning his wages and spending them recklessly, in his anti-hoarding tendencies, in his easy good-humour, his elasticity of spirits, his unthriftiness and unworldliness, Oliver was undoubtedly an embodiment of the popular type of the Irishman. Though his earnings in the latter years of his life were considerable, he died two thousand pounds in debt. “Was ever poet so trusted before !” said Samuel Johnson, in generous extenuation of his insolvency. Goldsmith was pre-eminently fitted for domestic life ; and if he had met with a good

woman who could have overlooked his plain face and figure, and loved him for his great endowments and fine qualities of heart, his destiny might have been different. Suppose "the Jessamy Bride," the lovely Mary Horneck, for whom it is thought Oliver cherished an unspoken affection, had consented to become his bride, what a delightful wedding there would have been, with Johnson and Burke as "best men," and Boswell to take notes of all the good things uttered! How well Mrs Goldsmith would have taken care of the money! what a devoted husband Oliver would have been, and how very fond of the children! But it was not so to be. In loneliness he had to go through life, and sink uncomforted under a heavy load of trouble. Not that Oliver was on the whole an unhappy man. With almost unbroken health, buoyancy of spirits, and a sweetness of temper that no misfortunes could spoil, he could not be habitually unhappy. And if he got but small compensation for all the riches he lavished on the world, he did his work well and cheerfully, and at length the world is repaying its debt of gratitude in such love and admiration as seldom gather round any one man. News has just reached us of the inauguration of a noble statue to his memory in front of Trinity College, Dublin,—a tribute of veneration from his countrymen, long deferred, but heartily rendered at last. Surely a similar memorial of Edmund Burke will speedily

follow ; so that the statues of the greatest of Irishmen may stand side by side in the capital of their native land. But Goldsmith has had a nobler monument than one of marble erected to his memory some sixteen years ago by a loving hand,—a memorial that “Time’s effacing finger” cannot obliterate. I refer to John Forster’s beautiful biography of our poet. This admirable writer, like another Old Mortality, has, with gentle, skilful touch, cleared away the moss from Oliver’s tomb, restored and deepened the inscription, and beautified the whole for the loving veneration of posterity. The foul accumulations of envy, malice, and stupidity have been removed from Oliver’s memory ; and in this noble “Life” we have the living man before us, with his tenderness and love, his sore trials, and wonderful genius. “The great heart of the world is just.” Truly does De Quincey say of the author of this book, “By the piety of his service to a man of exquisite genius, so long and so foully misrepresented, Forster has earned a right to interweave for ever his own cipher and cognisance, in filial union, with those of Oliver Goldsmith.”

While it is true that trial and difficulty are good for man, and necessary to his development, as the storm-cradle to the oak sapling, yet sunshine is healthful and needful too. Recognition, and applause, and love, are the best stimulants of genius ; though the

world is rather sparing in their application, and, as a general rule, prefers first to stone its benefactors, and, after a reasonable interval, to build their sepulchres. To meet genius with scorn and neglect, malignity and cruelty, and send it forth to wander with torn and bleeding breast, till it drops into an untimely grave, is certainly not the way to make the most of Heaven's most precious gift. Suppose that, instead of struggling with poverty, and wasting his powers on works that any commonplace man could have done almost as well, Goldsmith had met with a more genial welcome from his generation, had enjoyed a little more leisure, and had had twenty years added to his life, what far higher results his wonderful genius might have achieved than even "The Deserted Village" and the "Vicar of Wakefield!" Ruskin, in his "Modern Painters," forcibly says:—"Love and trust are the only mother's milk of any man's soul. So far as he is hated and mistrusted, his powers are destroyed. Do not think that with impunity you can follow the eyeless fool, and shout with the shouting charlatan, and that the men you thrust aside with gibe and blow are thus sneered and crushed into the best service they can do you. As surely as the fruit-bud falls before the east wind, so fails the power of the kindest human heart if you meet it with poison."

On the whole, however, we have reason to be

thankful for what Goldsmith has left us. His histories have won a permanent place in our literature, by the simplicity and beauty of their style, and the purity, moderation, and wisdom that pervade their pages. His delightful Essays, in which there are instruction and amusement, but no cynicism, will long command our smiles and our tears; and will be read when the weightier moralisings of Johnson are consigned to oblivion. To his honour be it recorded that in a coarse, licentious age, he preserved perfect purity of expression; and never sullied his genius by thoughts, images, or words that could call up a blush on the cheek of modesty—never pandered, for gain, to vile or unholy passions. We take leave of him in the noble words of Thackeray:—"Think of him reckless, thriftless, if you like—but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life, and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph, and of the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humour delights us still; his song fresh and beautiful as when first he charmed with it; his words in all our mouths; his very weaknesses beloved and familiar—his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us: to do gentle kindnesses: to succour

with sweet charity: to soothe, caress, and forgive: to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor."

If, then, we are to regard Goldsmith as the impersonation of one phase of Irish character,—of its generous warmth, its impulsiveness, its thoughtless benevolence, and its improvidence,—it is but fair to allow Edmund Burke to stand forward as the representative of another aspect of the same character. He is a proof that a man may be an embodiment of the loftier and sterner virtues,—of self-denial, regulated foresight, temperance, and austere economy,—and yet be an Irishman; and that the race, known all the world over for that vivacity and buoyancy of nature which no amount of misery can eradicate, can also boast of producing a statesman and a philosopher, who all his life was animated by one lofty purpose, and pursued it, with unflinching perseverance and gigantic industry, to the last. If Burke cannot be quoted as the representative of a numerous class of his countrymen, at least he is an illustrious proof of what great possibilities are in the Irish nature; and a noble example for kindling the heroic virtues in the hearts of each young generation of Irishmen. May many arise to tread in his footsteps, and rival his genius! Yes—Ireland claims as her own this man of imperial intellect, who ranks, in the judgment of such men as Mackintosh and Macaulay, with Bacon and Shakespeare; of whom

Lord Jeffrey said, "The greatest and most accomplished intellect that England has produced for centuries, and of a noble and lovable nature;" of whom Robert Hall, in his "Apology for the Freedom of the Press," wrote:—"His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation and every walk of art." Twelve years ago the *Times* contained the following noble words:—"The intellectual prowess of Edmund Burke is the admiration of the world. Since Bacon quitted life, England had not possessed so marvellous a son. Philosophy dwelt in his soul, and raised him to the dignity of a prophet. Gorgeous eloquence was his natural inheritance, practical wisdom his chief accomplishment; while all the intellectual graces were his hourly companions. Politics, when he dealt with them, assumed a grandeur which they had never known before, for he raised them above the exigences of his own fleeting day, to apply them to the instruction and the wants of future ages. That which will render Shakespeare familiar to our hearths, while a hearth can be kindled in England, will also secure the immortality of Edmund Burke. There was nothing local, nothing temporary, nothing circumscribed in his magnificent utterance. His appeals were not to the prejudices of his contemporaries, or to the ever-changing sentiments of the time. He marched with a sublime movement ever in advance of the mul-

titude. Every generation can point to its popular chief, and there are few epochs which do not boast of their Fox. In what political age shall we look for a statesman in all respects so illustrious as Burke?"

The language of this extract is as true as it is strong and beautiful; and is another proof that the fame of Burke is extending every day, and that the cobwebs are getting brushed away from his memory. How true the old Greek proverb—"The mill of the gods grinds late, but it grinds fine." It is true, as the writer in the *Times* has stated, that Burke was "ever in advance of the multitude." He it was who first enunciated those great measures of reform which, in our own day, are but partially carried out. He it was who first uttered the principles of free trade in the House of Commons, to the horror of the great Pitt, before Adam Smith had written his "Wealth of Nations." He it was who, from the outset of his career, urged the claims of the Irish Catholics to emancipation, and enforced the justice and policy of the measure with his dying breath. He opposed the cruel laws enacted against insolvents, and laboured in mitigating the horrible penal code of that day. He denounced the slave-trade, he laboured at law-reform, and is now admitted to have been the first administrative and financial reformer Britain has produced. In the midst of all his immense labours, he found time to help and cheer struggling genius. It was he who sustained the

heroic Armenian, Emin, when poverty had him by the throat ; it was he who rescued Barry, the great painter, from obscurity, supported him during his studies, and set him on the high road to fortune ; and it was he who saved the poet Crabbe, when almost sinking in neglect and starvation.

What are we to say of Burke's character as sketched in "Retaliation," by his friend and admirer Goldsmith ? When we take into account that the poem was written twenty-three years before the death of Burke, when his great powers were only beginning to be felt, it must be admitted that the delineation is a wonderful proof of Goldsmith's insight—a striking instance of the unerring divinations of genius. But then it is quite an exaggeration to assert, as some have done, that it holds literally true in every particular. I think Goldsmith himself never meant it to be construed *literally*. There is evidently only the playful exaggeration of the satirist in the lines—

" Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

To say that Burke was wholly uninfluenced by party ties all his life, would be to pronounce him more than mortal ; but when did he ever sacrifice truth or honesty to party considerations ? or in what instance did he degrade his fine genius into the mere tool of party ? His separation from his party, in consequence of his views regarding the French Revolution, is a

noble proof of his independence. Then, again, the statement that he was

“Too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining,”

must be viewed as partly playful badinage, when we remember the overwhelming effect produced by his orations, and the eager applause with which they were listened to. No doubt, to the many-acred, top-booted gentlemen of the House of Commons, Burke's flights of imagination were often incomprehensible, and his orations wearisome, especially near dinner-hour; but surely this is no disparagement of the orator, whatever it may be of some portion of his audience. The remainder of the epitaph, rightly understood, reads as an eulogium on Burke. Goldsmith divined that his countryman never would become a successful statesman, in the worldly sense of the terms; that being “too fond of the right to pursue the expedient,” his proud genius would never stoop to the mean arts necessary to secure place and pay—would never allow him to wear any man's harness or toil as another's drudge; and that his conscientiousness was too keen to permit him to sustain a dishonest cause. If this policy condemned him to “eat mutton cold and cut blocks with a razor,” then poverty in his case was a mark of true nobility. It was from his teachings and writings that Fox constructed that “short sentence drawn from a long

experience," which was the grand motto of Burke's own political life,—“What is morally wrong cannot be politically right.” We may call his efforts in connexion with the American War, the French Revolution, the impeachment of Hastings, in one sense failures; but, in the highest and best sense, they were great victories. If his life was a battle and march, it was also a moral triumph.

How some of his fine sayings linger in the memory; and, having become so familiar, we have almost forgotten who first struck them out! Take a few illustrations:—“Vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.” “Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.” “What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.” “There is, however, a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue.” “When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice, in a contemptible struggle.” “The age of chivalry is gone.” “Geography, though an earthly subject, is a heavenly study.” “It is the nature of all greatness not to be exact.” “Those who are bountiful to crimes will be rigid to merit and penurious to service.” “You had that action and counteraction, which in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe.” “All government, indeed every human benefit and

enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter."

Here, then, we must part with Erin's most illustrious son, who, when living, was able

"The applause of listening senates to command,"

and who, with the author of "The Deserted Village," stands for ever crowned with the wreath of the immortals. Dear and hallowed be the memory of Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith! Honour to the fair land that gave them birth!

"When the pure soul of honour shall cease to inspire thee,
And kind hospitality leave thy gay shore,
And the nations that know thee shall cease to admire thee,
Then, Erin ma vourneen, I'll love thee no more.

"When the trumpet of fame shall cease to proclaim thee
Of heroes the nurse, as in ages of yore,
And the muse and the records of genius disdain thee,
Then, Erin ma vourneen, I'll love thee no more.

"When thy brave sons shall cease to be generous and witty,
And cease to be loved by the fair they adore,
And thy daughters shall cease to be virtuous and pretty,
Then, Erin ma vourneen, I'll love thee no more."

LECTURE THE THIRD.

WIT AND HUMOUR.

WHATEVER we may make of it, there is no setting aside the fact, that a perception of the ludicrous, leading to some corresponding outward manifestation, is really an attribute of our common humanity. Throughout this strange, mysterious web of existence there runs the mirthful element. Just as truly as there is in every mind, more or less, the perception of beauty and harmony, is there also the perception of the ludicrous; and just as truly as the elements of beauty and harmony are around us in nature and in human life, so truly are we encompassed on all sides with the subtle elements of mirth. I do not mean to say that all minds are equally endowed with a sensibility for the ludicrous. You will meet with men so dull in this respect that, as Sydney Smith said, only a surgical operation could introduce into their dense heads the comprehension of a joke. There are individuals, too, to whom one

of Handel's grand oratorios would be only a noise, more or less agreeable, and the Venus de Medicis only a block of marble. Such instances, however, constitute the rare exceptions, and do not determine the rule; the vast majority of mankind manifesting a keen delight in beauty, harmony, and provocatives of mirth. For good and wise ends, our beneficent Creator has implanted in man the power of viewing things under a ludicrous aspect; and has spread around us objects and events which directly appeal to this internal sense. Like all our other original endowments, its purpose is clearly beneficent; and, rightly exercised, it is productive of happiness. This life of ours is serious enough, with present duty pressing on us, and the inexorable gates of destiny opening before us. No doubt it is a solemn thing for a human being to find himself alive, whirled through infinite space, on the surface of this earthly ball—

“ Stars silent over him,
Graves silent under him.”

Deep and serious views of this mysterious existence must press at times on all true hearts that are in contact with fact and reality. This world is no mere play-ground, or ball-room, or exchange; but “a hall of doom”—a training-ground for immortals. Yet while this is true, it is no less true that life has many sides, and presents itself under many aspects, and we are fitted to sympathise with them all; and to pro-

mote our best culture we must do so. It is not good for us to be always in contact with what is stern and solemn. We must at times "sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar," but not take up our permanent abode there. To retain its health the mind must have variety. It is therefore good for us to relax,—to unbind the heavy burden of care at times,—to let the genial smile smooth out the wrinkled brow, the hearty laugh shake the sides, and the glow of pure and innocent mirth light up the countenance. Thus are secured to us those blessed pauses in our course, in which we draw a deep breath, and gather strength for the remainder of the journey. "One should take care," says Addison, "not to grow too wise for so great a pleasure of life as laughter." The bow, always strung, loses its elasticity; the mind, always on the stretch of high thought or purpose, will give way. Mercifully and kindly is it appointed that the ludicrous should break in upon us, and lure away the mind from the cares of business, the pursuits of ambition, the fascinations of study, and the corroding anxieties of life. Think of dear, sweet childhood, with its shouts of merriment, its glee unclouded by thoughts of to-morrow;—(I pity the man whose heart does not throb responsive to the sound)—think of manhood's and maidenhood's ringing laughter—of the

" Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,

Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek ;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides ;—”

think of all this, and say would not this world of ours be a different and sadder place, were man not endowed with a capability of laughter, and surrounded with the elements of the ludicrous ?

Is it not a striking proof of the benevolence of the Creator that man, the creature most sensitive to the miseries of life, should be the only one of the animated series capable of laughing at the woes of his existence ? Beyond all doubt, this endowment helps him to bear misfortunes that would otherwise press with intolerable weight, and blunts the keen edge of calamity. It may be disputed whether some of the lower creation do not possess the rudiments of reason ; but not even Darwin or Huxley pretend to discover any endowment in “our poor relations,” the monkeys, approximating to risibility. Heaven-gazing man alone perceives the ludicrous, and indulges in the pleasant noise called laughter. The brute countenance has no smiles. It would be difficult, perhaps, to name any other faculty that plays a larger or more important part in the economy of human society. Where is the man, with the very longest and gravest face, who does not at times relax, and crack his joke with a friend ? Even the most supernaturally solemn man

must have "crowed" when a baby; and something must have gone wrong with him since if he has abandoned the practice. Think of the mirth that is continually circulating about our tea-tables and dinner-tables, and of the zest it imparts to social intercourse! Don't we all laugh at one another, take each other off behind-backs, and indulge in playful remarks on the little personal peculiarities and slight frailties of our friends? Of course we do; and it is consolatory to know that the laughter of this circle is the laughed-at of that other; so that matters are very much equalised. Go among the labouring population, and hear how large a share of their conversation is made up of ludicrous remarks on one another, and on their betters too; and how much this gladsome mirth lightens their toils! Then, what a literature wit and humour have created! what a host of witty and humorous writers we can marshal! and what a powerful influence on human affairs they have wielded, and do wield! Indeed, no great writer, who aims at presenting a faithful picture of human life, neglects the witty and humorous department; and however much of the grand and heroic may mingle therein, the work is found to be defective, as a mirror of nature, if the ludicrous have no place. Even grave Homer introduces his Thersites flinging his gibes at the Grecian heroes. Shakespeare—the all-comprehending—the

greatest delineator of human life—has numberless embodiments of wit and humour in their rarest forms, from Jack Falstaff to the grave-digger in “Hamlet.” Sir Walter Scott revels in this department, and has given us his immortal Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Dominie Sampson, Dugald Dalgetty, Peter Peebles, and Andrew Fairservice. In Mrs Stowe’s fine tale of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” that has stirred so many millions of hearts, who does not like Topsy? and who does not feel that the story would be deficient without that ebony mover of mirth, with her unconscious, immeasurable ignorance, and calm stupidity? Even our sweet poet Cowper, himself one of the saddest of men, has set all the world laughing by his humorous tale of “John Gilpin,” whose ever-memorable ride, and well-known hat and wig, will continue to shake the sides of unborn generations, young and old. Thus, you see, the ludicrous must have its place; laughter will break out; the clown will tumble; Punch and Judy will be called for, in spite of the gravest objections. The man who would ignore this powerful tendency of humanity, or try to frown it down, has made but small progress in the study of life. Considering the wide sway exercised by this impulse, and the great and important results flowing from it, I think it is really worth while to inquire into its nature and tendencies, and thus try to get at the philosophy of the matter.

Not only has human life its ludicrous element, but even its serious side has its ludicrous points. Mirth seems to be ever lying in wait round the corner, ready to trip us up, even in our serious moods. Through all the woof of life, the fine threads of wit largely penetrate. We are thus constantly on the verge of the ludicrous. A very serious affair has only to be turned a little round, and it becomes laughable; the grand, the heroic, the sublime, tumble into the comic. It was a favourite saying of Napoleon,—“Between the sublime and the ridiculous there is only a step.” Suppose a stump-orator, brimful of patriotism and disinterested benevolence, addressing an enraptured audience; some mischievous rogue comes behind him when in one of his loftiest flights of oratory, and with a smart blow knocks his hat completely over his eyes. No amount of patriotism could preserve gravity of countenance, as he struggles to extricate himself from the ruins of his hat. Even the eloquence of Lord John Russell would be extinguished by such a mishap. The transition from the grave to the gay is instantaneous. Even the kindly greeting of “Auld Lang Syne” has a little of the ludicrous lurking in it. The affectionate friend, who seems rather disposed to be jolly, meeting his old school-fellow, after years of separation, inquires pathetically,

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?”

And then he goes on, quite tenderly, almost blubbering, to recount how they had, in youth,

“ Paidl’t i’ the burn,
And pu’d the gowans fine.”

All this is very beautiful and touching ; but mark how prudence mingles with good fellowship. He adds—

“ And surely ye’ll be *your* pint stoup,
And surely I’ll be *mine*.”

In the midst of all the outgoings of his affection, he has a wary eye on the reckoning, and is determined not to pay more than a fair share of the bill ; and therefore gently, but effectually, jogs his friend’s memory as to the propriety of “standing treat” in the usual reciprocal method. Only a “canny Scotchman” would have thought of that at such an interesting moment. I suppose it is owing to this proximity of the serious and the comic, that we find in many of our fine old cathedrals so many laughing, mirth-provoking faces, cut in stone or carved in oak. Here is the noble spire piercing the sky,—the graceful arch losing itself in the vaulted roof,—the long-drawn aisle and splendid window, all suggestive of the loftiest ideas ; but outside are groups of most grotesque faces, singularly provocative of mirth ; and under the seats are fine old oak carvings, highly comical in their subjects, as though the erectors had, like school-boys, been drawing laughable caricatures, to relieve the tedium of life, and give vent to the feeling of the

ludicrous. It is a picture of human life. Take as another illustration of our position the laying of the Atlantic Telegraph. What could be grander than this achievement; noble, patient effort triumphing over obstacles; mind combating matter and gaining the victory; two worlds brought into contact! The whole civilised world was jubilant over it. The press assured us it was a great event. Even the pulpit admitted the topic into its sacred precincts, and many a preacher waxed eloquent over the sympathetic nerve laid down between the Old World and the New. Our American cousins, however, determining to be foremost in the jubilation, managed to take the short step between the sublime and the ridiculous, and set all the world laughing. The extravagant antics gone through, in some of their cities, in this period of excitement, are hardly credible. A western editor capped the climax, when, writing under a tremendous head of steam, he announced the startling event thus:—"The world is finished,—its spinal cord is laid, and now it begins to think. A living nerve has been unwound from the Anglo-Saxon heart, and tied in a true-love knot between the old world and the new." Even such a grave body as the Corporation of New York lost its balance on this grave occasion; and, in an address to the Telegraph Company, congratulated them on the fact that the earth was a sphere and not a plane;

“for,” said they, “had it not been so, the operation of sin, working through the passions of nations and individuals, would have driven the weak to the extreme brink of humanity, and hurled them over the precipice once for all,” (a fearful fall for the good people,—“Never ending, still beginning,”—

“ Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world.”)

The twinkling eye of *Punch* lighted on these precious specimens of “buncombe,” and he reproduced them in a slightly altered form, thus :—

“The deed is done. A new heart-string, forgotten at creation, has been inserted into the world, and henceforth its pulses will keep time to the flapping of the wings of our almighty and inextinguishable eagle. May the blood of freedom course along that giant vein, with the rush of Niagara, and sweep away before its mightiness the mouldering cerements of antiquated hallucination. O noble men, let us liquor.”

“ Two nations, in two different ages riz,
Stand prominently out of the abyss :
One, England, a respectable old hoss,
And one, America, of giant force.
The power of Nature could no further go,
So made C. W. Field to join the two.”

“The aged and effete island ties herself to the apron-string of vigorous, young America. Among the awful chasms of the roaring ocean, shall fly the teachings of liberty, and Field’s wire, like the spear

of Uranus, shall touch the squat toad of despotism at the ear of Eve, and the fiend, starting up in all its sulphureous ignominy of ugliness, shall be spiked like a bug-beetle, upon the crystal weapon of Columbia." What a contrast did the imperturbable John Bull present, in the way in which he received the same intelligence. Instead of going into hysterics, he simply sat down and ate a more than usually substantial dinner.

Now, the principle I am endeavouring to establish is, that even great, sublime, and solemn things have their ludicrous points. Noble feeling oversteps its due boundary, and becomes sentimentality; eloquence, over-strained, becomes bathos; and immediately Wit, the moral policeman, pounces upon them, as fair food for mirth. The very best thing to be done is to let the shafts of ridicule rain upon them; for they have become essential falsities, and should be driven out of society. All extravagance and exaggeration provoke, inevitably, the assaults of wit. Crinoline alone seems to be able to defy its utmost efforts, perhaps because the feminine mind is defective in a sense of the ridiculous. In order to preserve our balance,—to prevent indignation becoming too intense, or passion or feeling too violent, or condemnation too severe,—it is often desirable to let the ludicrous aspect of a matter come into view. Did we gaze at human wretchedness, folly, and wickedness, only with

the eye of conscience or passion, thought and observation would drive many a good man to the borders of insanity. We should be thrown into utter despair or driven to blind destructive intolerance, and wish the whole social fabric torn to pieces. But to counteract this over-sensitiveness, Nature has kindly provided a feeling of the ludicrous. Mirth appears and takes hold of these dark, exaggerated views of human condition, and exhibiting their ludicrous points, saves us from being injured by them. The very faults and follies of our fellows, that threaten to drive us into madness or indignant disgust, when viewed under the kindly influence of humour, lose much of their repulsive aspect. Hatred is disarmed, passion softened, and humanity preserved. Not that we are led in this way to call evil good, or to shut our eyes against the sight of what is bad ; but a modifying element comes in, and we now see vice and folly to be contemptible and mean, as well as odious. Distorted and exaggerated views of life are thus corrected. Thus has it been kindly and wisely ordained that the fountains of laughter and of tears should lie close to one another in our composite nature, and that deepest pathos should have mirth for its nearest of kin. Nay, more ; it is found that the intermingling of these two renders the pathos more tender and moving, and the mirth more wholesome. Take, as an illustration of this, a song written by Thomas Noel,

entitled, "The Pauper's Drive," in which sad truths are pathetically interwoven with a grim and terrible humour,—the humour deepening the hold the sad facts take upon the mind:—

"There's a grim one-horse hearse in a jolly round trot ;
To the churchyard a pauper is going, I wot ;
The road it is rough, and the hearse has no springs,
And hark to the dirge that the sad driver sings :
 Rattle his bones over the stones ;
 He's only a pauper that nobody owns.

"Oh ! where are the mourners ? Alas ! there are none,
He has left not a gap in the world now he's gone ;
Not a tear in the eye of child, woman, or man ;—
To the grave with his carcase as fast as you can.
 Rattle his bones, &c.

"What a jolting and creaking and splashing and din !
The whip how it cracks, and the wheels how they spin !
How the dirt, right and left, o'er the hedges is hurl'd !
The pauper at length makes a noise in the world.
 Rattle his bones, &c.

"Poor pauper defunct ! he has made some approach
To gentility, now that he's stretch'd in a coach ;
He's taking a drive in his carriage at last,
But it will not be long, if he goes on so fast.
 Rattle his bones, &c.

"But a truce to this strain, for my soul it is sad,
To think that a heart, in humanity clad,
Should make, like the brutes, such a desolate end,
And depart from the light without leaving a friend.
 Bear softly his bones over the stones,
 Though a pauper, he's one whom his Maker yet owns."

I am aware that some good men, whose views, I take the liberty of saying, are rather contracted, are inclined to condemn all manifestations of mirth, or,

at least, they are inclined to regard them with great suspicion, and to confine them within very narrow limits. Let me quote for the benefit of such the words of the great and good Dr Chalmers. In his "Moral Philosophy" he says, speaking of our sense of the ludicrous:—"It often ministers to the gaiety of man's heart, even when alone; and when he congregates with his fellows, is ever and anon breaking forth into some humorous conception, that infects alike the fancies of all, and finds vent in one common shout of ecstasy. Mirth begins to tumultuate in the heart of some one; on the first utterance of which, it passes, with irrepressible sympathy, into the hearts of all around him; whence it obtains discharge in a loud and general effervescence. It is thus that the pleasure connected with our sense of the ludicrous forms one of the most current gratifications of human life, and has so much of happiness and so much of benevolence allied with it. . . . And when we see so much of human kindness and of human enjoyment associated with that exhilaration of the heart to which this emotion is so constantly giving rise,—ministering with such copiousness both to the smiles of the domestic hearth and the gaieties of festive companionship,—we cannot but regard it as the provision of an indulgent Father, who hath ordained it as a sweetener or an emollient amid the annoyances and ills which flesh is heir to." He adds,

“There is unquestionable good done by it when it puts to flight the seriousness of resentment, or the seriousness of suffering,—softening the malignant asperities of debate, and reconciling us to those misadventures and pettier miseries of life, which, if not so alleviated, would keep us in a state of continual festermment ; and thus it is a palpable testimony to the goodness and wisdom of Him who framed us.”

In this passage, Chalmers has admirably summed up the benefits that flow from our sense of the ludicrous, and the ends which it subserves in the economy of the universe. It is indeed “a palpable testimony to the goodness and wisdom of Him who framed us.” An innocent child once said, “Mamma, did the cheerful God make all these beautiful flowers?” Yes; all the flowers that garland the earth are His smiles. And as He who clothed the lily in such beauty, and enriched the human soul with the faculty of enjoying it, has said thereby to man, “Adorn, create forms of beauty—paint the canvas and sculpture the marble;” so, in constituting a distinctive faculty to perceive the endless combinations of the ludicrous and mirthful, He has intimated, as plainly as though it were written in letters of light upon the sky, that we are in due measure to enjoy the ludicrous. There is beauty all around us; beauty in “day and the sweet approach of eve and morn;” beauty in vernal bloom and summer’s rose; beauty in

“the human face divine;” and man is fitted to revel in all this. Great are our substantial every-day mercies; but when we see superadded to this great stream of beneficence, the enjoyments flowing from gaiety and mirth, from the sparkling fountains of wit and humour, do we not feel the truth and beauty of the child’s words, that God is indeed the “cheerful God,” claiming not only our reverence, but the child-like love and trust of our hearts? Thus, rightly considered, this faculty has not only its lawful and innocent indulgence, but its very existence is a proof of Divine beneficence—as truly so as the flowers that, like orient pearls, are scattered over the earth; and from it, too, we learn something of our Creator’s character, as well as from the galaxies that gem the sky. If, then, our wit and humour be pure, and free from malice, hatred, and selfish vanity; if they be indulged in only under the approbation of conscience, and kept within legitimate bounds, we can regard them as a source of pure and lawful enjoyment. At the proper time, cheerfulness is to be sought and mirthfulness indulged. We have the highest authority for saying, “there is a time to laugh.” Our earth might have been created without the element of beauty; and were it a mere cattle-stall, where we were to eat, and sleep, and grow fat, there would be no need of star-radiance, or cloud-drapery, or flower-decking, or ocean-music. And so, too, we could conceive of a

world where there would be nothing to call up a smile or provoke a laugh,—a demure, well-behaved, model world, clad in drab, like a Quaker's household, no angularities or oddities, no incongruity to awaken mirth, and no talent in the unfortunate inhabitants for enjoying the ludicrous; but if there be such a world, it must be a very dull one; and we have reason to be thankful it is not our own laughter-loving little planet. Fortunately for us, life has its comedy and broad farce, as well as its tragedy.

In the extract I have already quoted, Dr Chalmers calls mirth "a sweetener or an emollient" amid life's annoyances. It lightens the woes and increases the joys of existence; and thus ministers, like a beneficent spirit, to our pure and innocent delights. This, however, applies rather to humour than wit—a distinction on which I shall dwell for a little by and by. I believe that a vast amount of gladness, geniality, charity, kindness, and happiness flows over the world from the fountain of humour. Its higher utterances

"Fall as soft as snow on the sea,
And melt in the heart as instantly."

The man who creates a thoroughly humorous character, must be regarded as a real benefactor of his species. Such a creation not only amuses and calls forth smiles and laughter, but also promotes sweetness of temper, cheerfulness of disposition, plucks the sting out of many of life's ills, calls forth the tender

and genial feelings of our heart, and disposes us to love our kind. What a real boon to society, for example, has been such a humorous creation as Shakespeare's fat knight, Sir John Falstaff—the jovial, the unimaginative, the epicurean, the delightful Falstaff,—his qualities, which are all “of the earth, earthy,” floating in a perfect sea of fun, frolic, and good-humour. The present, the personal, the physical, make up the sum of his existence. For all fanciful and imaginative things he has an unlimited scorn; or, rather, he has no sense of their existence. To him life presents no perplexing problems, no heart-breaking contradictions. How boisterously he would have laughed at the idea of “storming across the inane,” or “standing between two eternities,” as a description of human life. He never troubles himself with the stars, the music of the spheres, or the shadows of the unseen. He is satisfied with things as they are. Unlike Hamlet, with his passionate questionings of destiny, and vain struggles with insoluble problems, and melancholy musings on this composite existence, Falstaff's eye goes not beyond the actual, and sees no visions, no spectres. Yet, far from making this fine creation of the fancy dull or shallow, Shakespeare has endowed him with noble mental faculties; with an intellect possessed of clearness, precision, strength, and subtlety, though directed by no lofty or useful purpose. The wildness and prodigality of his images

and illustrations, the inexhaustible freshness of his ideas and phrases, the ease with which he jumbles together things most unlike, all declare a mental nature of rich and rare endowment. But the essential element of his being is humour. To him every individual, every event, every thought, sentiment, and emotion has a ludicrous tinge. All things and all persons are objects of his mockery. His wit is flashing, penetrating, scathing, unrestrained by any moral law. Such is Falstaff—an embodiment of wit unsoftened by a loving heart, unguided by morality and religion. Selfish and voluptuous, he may be studied for the wonderful richness of his humour, but is not to be admired or imitated.

What an inexhaustible fund of merriment, too, has the world found in that most richly humorous of all characters, the immortal Sancho Panza, so shrewd and matter-of-fact, so selfish, fat, and fond of good living! What a delightful contrast to his chivalrous, lean master, wrapped in splendid illusions and living outside the real world! Sancho is sly, good-humoured, sensual; cares nothing whatever for glory or honour, but a great deal for good feeding, a whole carcase, and a sound sleep; and when he gets a satisfactory repose he “blesses the man that invented sleep.” The contrast and co-operation of these two characters form one of the most exquisite creations of the humorous imagination. There they are—an

inimitable pair—master and man—tossed in a blanket, amid boisterous peals of merriment, from generation to generation. They remind us of another strongly contrasted pair—Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim—who have evoked many smiles, and, let us hope, called forth many deeds of charity. Nor must we forget that fine embodiment of Scottish humour—Bailie Nicol Jarvie—with his quaint oddities, his sly, half-conscious humour, and his captivating weaknesses that make us all like him immensely. What could be finer than the defence he urged in presence of his brother magistrates, on behalf of his wild freebooter kinsman, Rob Roy? “I tauld them,” said the Bailie, “that I would vindicate nae man’s faults; but set apart what Rob had done again the law, and the misfortune o’ some folk losing life by him, and he was an honestest man than stud on any o’ their shanks.” How deeply indebted is the world to Charles Dickens—the greatest of living humourists—for that host of laughter-moving creations with which he has brightened so many firesides, cheered so many lonely hours, and “peopled our world of thought with forms and faces whose beautiful facetiousness sheds light and warmth over our whole being.” The Wellers, senior and junior, lead the van, with Mr Pickwick in his spectacles; Richard Swiveller, with the Marchioness on his arm; Mrs Nickleby and the Crumles family; the irrepressible Sairey Gamp and

her mythical friend Mrs Harris ; the improvident but delightful Micawber, and the immortal Pecksniff. These are now familiar names,—well-known acquaintances in thousands of households, all over the civilised world ; and these exquisite creations have flooded us with mirth and delight. The world would be a great deal poorer wanting them ; and I think it is unquestionable that, on the whole, they have acted in a wholesome way,—increasing good humour and charity, and thus indirectly benefiting and advancing society. Many a dark hour has been brightened and many a happy home made happier by the visits of such personages. Open the door and let the whole merry crew come trooping in.

Let us now, for a little, become metaphysical, and inquire in a passing way, in what wit and humour consist, and how they differ from one another. It is no easy matter to define that subtle quality we recognise as the ludicrous ; it is almost too evanescent for the intellect to grasp. Like the beauty of a landscape, or the aroma of the rose, it may be felt but not described, enjoyed but not defined. We can all laugh ; but try to discover in what the ludicrous consists, and the probability is that the effort will make you very serious indeed. This much, however, seems to me discoverable : that in all witty and humorous creations, you will find certain dissimilar ideas or images brought together, and some unexpected simi-

larity between them expressed or suggested,—the sudden discovery of unsuspected resemblance giving rise to that pleasurable surprise which expresses itself in smiles or laughter. Or the same effect is produced by bringing together incongruous circumstances, personages, or images, which are rarely if ever found in juxtaposition, and exhibiting them in such contrast that a perception of the ludicrous follows. The essence in humour is *incongruity*; the result in both wit and humour is agreeable surprise. But wit accomplishes its object by suggesting some resemblance between images and things that are wide apart; humour, by clashing together incongruities. Thus, for example, a traveller in the United States describes a republican whom he met as so furious against monarchs, that he would not even wear a crown to his hat. The wit lies in the incongruous combination of the monarch's crown and the crown of the republican's hat, and the unexpected suggestion of a resemblance between them. A witness on a certain trial described an individual as "a most respectable man." "What do you mean by being respectable?" said the counsel. "I mean," was the reply, "that he always kept a gig." Here the ludicrous surprise depends on the incongruous combination of respectability and a gig. The same effect follows the Irish definition of gentility. "He was a dacent, respectable man; he always kept a pig;" and the description of the Irish

echo that, when you called out "How do you do?" answered "Quite well, I thank you." Robert Hall's wit did not desert him, even when insanity had clouded his noble intellect. A stupid individual, visiting the asylum where he was, called out, "Why, what brought you here, Mr Hall?" "What will never bring you here," tapping his head; "too much brain!" "I hear you are going to marry Miss Blank," said some one to him. "What! I marry Miss Blank! I should as soon marry Beelzebub's eldest daughter, and go home and live with the old folk!" "The land tortoise," said Sydney Smith, "has two enemies,—man and the boa-constrictor. Man takes him home and roasts him, and the boa-constrictor swallows him whole, shell and all, and consumes him slowly in the interior, *as the Court of Chancery does a great estate.*" What could be finer than the same writer's retort on a clerical friend who had written him a note, not dated in the ordinary way, but after a certain ecclesiastical fashion,—*"St Blank's Day—Eve of some other St Blank's Day."* Sydney's reply was dated, *"Washing Day—Eve of Ironing Day."* Admirable too was the mixture of wit and humour in his advice to the newly-appointed Bishop of New Zealand, in allusion to the cannibal tendencies of his parishioners. He urged him to be attentive to the minor no less than the more important duties of his office—to be given to hospitality;

and in order to meet the tastes of his native guests, never to be without a *smoked little boy* in the bacon-rack, and a *cold clergyman* on the side-board ; and “as for yourself, my lord,” he said, “I can only say, that when your parishioners eat you, I sincerely hope you will disagree with them.” His description of the tropics is inimitable:—“Flies get entry into your mouth, into your eyes, into your nose ; you eat flies, drink flies, and breathe flies. Lizards, cockroaches, and snakes get into the bed ; ants eat up the books ; scorpions sting you on the foot. Everything bites, stings, and bruises ; every second of your existence you are wounded by some piece of animal life, that nobody has ever seen before, except Swammerdam and Meriam. An insect with eleven legs is swimming in your tea-cup ; a nondescript with nine wings is struggling in the small beer ; or a caterpillar, with several dozen eggs in his belly, is hastening over the bread and butter. All nature is alive, and seems to be gathering all her entomological hosts to eat you up, as you are standing, out of your coat, waistcoat, and breeches. Such are the tropics. All this reconciles us to our dews, vapours, and drizzles,—to our apothecaries rushing about with gargles and tinctures,—to our old British constitutional coughs, sore throats, and swelled faces.”

Now, in all these instances, the ludicrous surprise is caused by clashing together incongruous things and

ideas. The force which calls into play the muscles that are employed in laughter, lies in the rapid surprise produced. In the following anecdote, it is the quickness and unexpectedness of the rejoinder that amuse us:—A nobleman and his lady, walking through a magnificent avenue, in one of the finest parts of Ireland, were accosted by a poor woman as follows—"The Lord bless your noble lordship, and your gracious ladyship. I dramed a drame about you both last night. I dramed your lordship gave me a pound of tobacco and your ladyship a pound of tay." "Ah! my good woman," says the peer, "dreams go by contraries." "To be sure they do," says the woman, "so it will be your lordship that will give me the tay, and her ladyship will give me the tobacco." It is related that Lord Macaulay, on one occasion, in order to obtain a sample of street literature, made his way to one of the lowest districts of London, and bought of a singing-boy a roll of ballads. Happening to turn round, as he reached home again, he perceived the youth, with a circle of young friends, was keeping close at his heels. "Have I not given you your price, sir?" was the great man's indignant remonstrance. "All right, guv'ner," was the response; "*we're only waiting till you begin to sing.*" Here the incongruity of the brilliant historian roaring out a ballad in the street creates the shock of ludicrous surprise. How admir-

able is the ridicule thrown upon caste-respectability by Douglas Jerrold, in the following passage!—"Wholesales don't mix with retails. Raw wool does not speak to halfpenny balls of worsted; tallow in the cask looks down upon sixes in the pound, and pig-iron turns up its nose at tenpenny nails." Eminently witty too was his definition of dogmatism,—“it is only *puppyism* come to its full growth.”

Wit and humour, though they are closely allied, have yet important points of difference, and are clearly distinguishable. Thackeray's definition of humour is the best with which I have met. He says, “Humour is wit and love; at any rate, I am sure that the best humour is that which contains most humanity, and which is flavoured throughout with tenderness and kindness.” This, I think, seizes on the essence of the matter. Humour has all the peculiar characteristics of wit, including the principles of contrast and assimilation; but it superadds a quality higher than all—namely, *love*, springing from sympathy and sensibility, and a tender fellow-feeling with humanity, even in its lowest and queerest shapes. It is possible for wit to flow entirely from the head, while the heart remains cold, callous, and scornful,—as in the case of Swift; but humour must have heart as well as head, and cannot dwell in an icy, cynical bosom. Its very essence is deep, genuine sensibility towards all forms of existence. Not hatred, contempt,

or scorn produce it,—only love. It elevates its objects, however low, into our sympathies and affections. Both wit and humour produce pleasurable surprise by incongruous collisions ; but while wit deals rather with *ideas*, humour fixes upon human *actions* and *manners*, and thus has to do with emotions, sentiments, and, above all, with character. Wit is often caustic, severe, and condemnatory, and looks on human weaknesses and follies with bitter scorn and sneering contempt, lashing them with withering sarcasm or blighting ridicule. But genial, kind-hearted humour mingles tenderness with its condemnation, and paints follies and weaknesses almost lovingly ; so that, while we see their absurdity, we sympathise with the subject of them,—we love, not hate. Wit may accompany fierce passions, and give a sting to hatred, or malice, or envy ; humour never does so : it must have kind feeling and fellow-feeling. Thus humour is a higher gift than wit ; it creates, while wit dissects and analyses. In its purest form, humour is one of the rarest and most precious gifts of genius—the bloom of a creative, genial, loving nature. How humane is its influence ! How it softens the rude inequalities of existence, and bridging over the space between the exalted and the lowly, brings them into sympathetic unison ! Thus does it throw a bright sunshine over existence, and helps us to kind, gentle, and tolerant views of life.

The distinction between wit and humour will come out clearer, perhaps, from an example or two. Take Pope and Swift,—they are pre-eminently witty writers, dealing in all manner of sarcastic, ironical, and burlesque productions; but they have almost nothing of the humorous element. Addison, on the other hand, lives and breathes in humour; and has bequeathed to us that noblest of humorous characters and finest of old English gentlemen, Sir Roger de Coverly. Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Parson Adams, The Artful Dodger, Mark Tapley, Joe Willet, Mrs Gamp, Major Pendennis, Mrs Poyser, are all humorous creations. Of modern writers, Jerrold and Thackeray are most witty; Charles Lamb and Dickens most humorous; while Sydney Smith presents the happiest combination of both. The author of “Rab and His Friends”—Dr John Brown—may also be named as one of our most genial humourists; and what quaintness, raciness, and tenderness mingle in his writings, all readers of “*Horæ Subsecivæ*” well know. Wit and humour, however, being but different species of the ludicrous, oftenest blend with and overlap one another. We rarely find wit altogether untempered by humour, or humour without a spice of wit. Humour is refined and sharpened by wit, and wit is softened and rendered kindlier by humour. In the writings of Sydney Smith it would be difficult to say whether the wit or humour

preponderates; and hence that genial sharpness which we so much admire in him. In his celebrated letters on American Debts, the sarcasm is keen, but the humour is genial, and we see that it is half in love and half in anger he writes. "I never meet a Pennsylvanian," he says, "at a London dinner, without feeling a disposition to seize and divide him,—to allot his beaver to one sufferer and his coat to another,—to appropriate his pocket-handkerchief to the orphan,—and to comfort the widow with his silver watch, Broadway rings, and London Guide, which he always carries in his pocket." Then with what inimitable humour he exhorts the supposed repudiators of their debts to repentance and reformation:—"My dear Jonathan, make a great effort,—book up at once and pay. Bull is naturally disposed to love you; but he loves nobody that does not pay him. His imaginary paradise is some planet of punctual payment, where ready money prevails and where debt and discount are unknown." "It is not for gin-sling and sherry-cobbler alone that man is to live; but for those great principles against which no argument can be listened to,—principles which give to every power a double power above their functions and their offices,—which are the books, the arts, the academies that teach, lift up, and nourish the world;—principles (I am quite serious in what I say) above cash, superior to cotton,

higher than currency,—principles without which it were better to die than live, which every servant of God, over every sea and in all lands, should cherish.” Never was the folly of unreasoning obstinacy, on the part of governments, more happily illustrated than in Sydney’s account of American independence:—“There was a period when the slightest concession would have satisfied the Americans; but all the world was in heroics: one set of gentlemen met at the Lamb and another at the Lion; blood-and-treasure men, breathing war, vengeance, and contempt; and in eight years afterwards, an awkward-looking gentleman, in plain clothes, walked up to the drawing-room of St James’s, in the midst of the gentlemen of the Lion and the Lamb, and was introduced as *the ambassador from the United States of America.*” In an argument for sustaining the dignity of the clergy becomingly, he says:—“A picture is drawn of a clergyman with £130 per annum, who combines all moral, physical, and intellectual advantages—a learned man, dedicating himself intently to the care of his parish,—of charming manners and dignified deportment,—six feet two inches high, beautifully proportioned, with a magnificent countenance, expressive of all the cardinal virtues and the ten commandments; and it is asked with an air of triumph if such a man as this will fall into contempt on account of his poverty? But substitute for him an

average, ordinary, uninteresting minister: obese, dumpy, neither ill-natured nor good-natured, neither learned nor ignorant, striding over the stiles to church with a second-rate wife—dusty and deliquescent—and four parochial children, full of catechism and bread and butter,—among all his pecuniary, saponaceous, oleaginous parishioners. Can any man of common sense say that all these outward circumstances of the ministers of religion have no bearing on religion itself?” As another illustration of the happy union of wit and humour, permit me to quote a passage from Browning’s exquisitely amusing poem, founded on the legend of “The Pied Piper of Hamelin:”—

“ Into the street the piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
There, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe utter’d,
You heard as if an army mutter’d;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—

Follow'd the piper for their lives.
 From street to street he piped advancing,
 And step for step they follow'd dancing,
 Until they come to river Weser,
 Wherein all plunged and perish'd
 —Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
 Swam across and lived to carry
 (As he the manuscript he cherish'd)
 To Rat-land home his commentary ;
 Which was—‘ At the first shrill notes of the pipe
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
 Into a cider-press’s gripe ;
 And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
 And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks ;
 And it seem’d as if a voice
 (Sweeter by far than by harp or by psaltery
 Is breathed) call’d out, “ O rats, rejoice !
 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery !
 So munch on, crunch on, take your muncheon,
 Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon ! ”
 And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
 All ready staved, like a great sun, shone
 Glorious scarce an inch before me,
 Just as methought it said, “ Come, bore me ! ”
 —I found the Weser rolling o’er me.’ ”

As a general rule, our American cousins are deficient in wit and humour ; and hence the prevalence among them of many absurdities which in other countries would be laughed down. Still, America can boast of her great humourists ;—Washington Irving, Hawthorne, Holmes, Lowell, are unsurpassed in their respective walks. Here is a little specimen of American humour, not bad in its way. The

author's name I do not know; the piece itself was read lately before some literary society in Massachusetts:—

“ A certain school, not far away,
'Mid Berkshire hills, one winter's day,
Was humming with its wonted noise
Of threescore mingled girls and boys ;
Some few upon their task intent,
But more on furtive mischief bent ;
The while the master's downward look
Was fasten'd on a copy-book ;
When suddenly, behind his back,
Rose, sharp and clear, a rousing SMACK !
As 'twere a battery of bliss
Let off in one tremendous kiss !
' What's that ?' the startled master cries ;
' That, thir,' a little imp replies,
' Wath William Willith, if you pleathe—
I thaw him kith Thuthanah Peathe !'
With frown to make a statue thrill,
The master thunder'd, ' Hither, Will !'
Like wretch o'ertaken in his track,
With stolen chattels on his back,
Will hung his head, in fear and shame,
And to the awful presence came,—
A great, green, bashful simpleton,
The butt of all good-natured fun ;
With smile suppress'd, and birch upraised,
The threatener falter'd, ' I'm amazed
That you, my biggest pupil, should
Be guilty of an act so rude !
Before the whole set school to boot !
What evil genius put you to't ?'
' 'Twas herself, sir,' sobb'd the lad ;
' I didn't mean to be so bad ;
But when Susannah shook her curls,
And whisper'd I was 'fraid of girls,
And dursn't kiss a baby doll,
I couldn't stand it, sir, at all,

But up and kiss'd her on the spot !
 I know, '—boo, boo,—' I ought to not,
 But somehow, from her looks, '—boo, boo,—
 I thought she kind o' wish'd me to !' ”

It is satisfactory to know that the master gave this boy a free pardon ; for evidently, as of old, it was the little Eve who “beguiled” him.

Here is another little specimen of American humour, by the grave philosopher, Emerson :—

“ The Mountain and the Squirrel
 Had a quarrel ;
 And the Mountain call'd the Squirrel, ‘ Little Prig.’
 Bun replied,
 ‘ You are doubtless very big ;
 But all sorts of things and weathers
 Must be taken in together
 To make up a year
 And a sphere.
 And I think it no disgrace
 To occupy my place.
 If I ’m not so large as you,
 You are not so small as I,
 And not half so spry.
 I ’ll not deny you make
 A very pretty squirrel track ;
 Talents differ ; all is wisely put ;
 If I cannot carry forests on my back,
 Neither can you crack a nut.”

And so little Squirrel walks round and over big, blustering Mountain ; and the spry logician at length fairly doubles up the lumbering old fellow, and scratches his head for him with a grave, satiric grace, that is quite edifying.

If we take pure wit, unmixed with humour, we

find that in this shape its general tendency is aggressive, reformatory, and destructive. As a reformer of morals and manners, we must assign a high place to wit. Rightly employed, it assails and sweeps away the worn out and the thoroughly bad, and thus makes way for something better. Thus, it must be admitted, wit is slightly radical in its tendencies. Recognising no prescriptive right, it strikes right and left at the false and the corrupt; and taking the most respectable and reverend things by the beard, will cover them with ridicule. And truly, in a world where there is so much vice, folly, hypocrisy, absurdity, pretension, and selfish wickedness,—such a rank growth of falsehood, show, gullibility, and general rascality,—where we are all such mummers, walking behind a mask at Vanity Fair, it is a happy arrangement that there is a faculty capable of seeing into all this, and of unmasking the whole, so as to make them seem what they really are. Vanity, pretension, pride, hypocrisy, and selfish ambition, have no such dangerous assailant as wit, when rightly directed. It comes behind; strips off the tawdry ornament that imposed upon the world, and exhibiting them, with their real faces, in all their ludicrous absurdity, sets mankind in a roar of laughter at things that seemed lately very venerable and awful. It admits people behind the scenes, and points out all the dirty ropes, and pulleys, and paint-pots,—all the

tinsel and cheap stage-properties, by which the great shows of the world are got up ; and exhibits, too, the poor actors, in their everyday clothes, without their high-heeled boots and their awful robes and crowns. All this is a positive and incalculable benefit to society. Without such a radical reformer to smite down such things and keep them in order, we should be utterly overrun by them. Nor is there, in such cases, any other weapon so effective as wit. Solemn argument is useless ; the lash of ridicule alone is of service. Have you never met with a stately, pompous individual, solemn in gait, and measured and oracular in speech, uttering the dullest commonplaces with all the gravity of Nestor ; able to settle the most difficult questions in a moment, and that incontrovertibly ; who seems to say—

“ I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark ? ”

How utterly he extinguishes all small, humble people ! How the poor, bright man is overawed by his very deportment, by the mere elevation of his eye-brows, and quails into silence ! How inexpressibly he bores us all, but we dare not yawn or contradict him. If you presume to differ from his opinions he will retire on his moral dignity, and stare at you in solemn silence, which is far more appalling than the strongest arguments. This imposing, official

sort of personage carries all before him ; and yet he succeeds pretty much in virtue of his stage-properties and deportment ; and has only sufficient sense to keep him from being an absolute stupiditarian, and to make him an inhuman bore. Society is greatly afflicted with such stilted characters, who really cause a deal of misery ; and are not only stupid themselves, but the cause of stupidity in others, for they are the death of all geniality within their circle. How are they to be repressed ? Why, I think they can only be successfully assailed by wit. They are proper subjects for Momus and his merry crew. Let the shafts of ridicule rain upon their stupid pomposity. Let wit, with its bright glancing rapier, assail them ; and just as a great gas-filled balloon collapses when pricked, so will these gaseous individuals come to the ground. In fact, we must hand over all such to the custody of Mr Punch, whose mission as a great moral and social reformer is now so generally admitted. This merry old gentleman, with his hunch-back, hooked nose, and twinkling, mischievous eye, is now a welcome visitor everywhere, and enjoys an immense popularity among old and young. We all feel that he supplies a want of our common nature, and exerts a wholesome influence in society, assaulting the contemptible, mean, and ridiculous, and exploding the false, the dastardly, and the corrupt. Mr Punch is not immaculate—who of us is so ?—but,

on the whole, his influence is decidedly favourable to good morals. Rarely, if ever, do you find anything really good, pure, or venerable held up to ridicule, scorn, or contempt in the pages of *Punch*. He is a satirist, but without coarseness or malignity. No dignity is too exalted for his pungent ridicule or biting sarcasm. Rome, Oxford, and Exeter Hall alike come in for a knock when they fall into bigotry or absurdity ; and why should they not ? All the little foibles of society are pleasantly exposed. Many a piece of wickedness has he laughed to scorn and annihilation. Next to the *Times*, he is now one of the great powers of the empire. Society needs such a gleeful, good-humoured castigator. Wanting him, we should be more liable to be gulled by pretenders and quacks or to do silly, vain, absurd things. A nation, as well as an individual, requires a sense of the ridiculous to keep them from contemptible actions.

For all absurd popular manias and delusions, by which weak heads are so apt to be turned, nothing is so effectual as ridicule. Did not Cervantes, by his Don Quixote, "laugh Spain's chivalry away,"—or rather Spain's mawkish, sentimental taste for the absurd romances of chivalry ? When any institution becomes shaky, and gets into its dotage, wit is sure to assail it remorselessly. In all great reforms it is the pioneer—undermining the old, exposing the false, and urging the speedy interment of the dead and

putrescent. So it was in the days of the Reformation, the French Revolution, the Reform Bill, and the Corn-Law agitation. All popular agitators well know the value of wit. Witness the enormous power once wielded over the public mind by Butler in his "*Hudibras*," by Swift and Churchill, and by Gilray and H. B. as caricaturists. Fox, Sheridan, Pitt, and Canning influenced men's minds quite as much by their witty productions as by their graver efforts, and these are now read when their speeches are hardly glanced at. Wit is strictly of no party, but oftenest on the radical side. "A Conservative," says Douglas Jerrold, "is a man who will not look at the new moon, out of respect for that ancient institution, the old one." But Radicalism does not escape—reform is a very good thing; but, says quaint old Fuller, "many hope that the tree will be felled who hope to gather chips by the fall." A German prince once gave his subjects a free constitution—what we call "responsible government." They were greatly dissatisfied, and complained that "heretofore they had paid taxes and been saved the trouble of government; but now they were not only taxed but had to govern themselves." "'God save the king,'" says Sydney Smith, "very often means, save my pension and place,—give my sisters an allowance out of the privy purse,—make me clerk of the irons,—let me survey the meltings,—let me live on the fruit of

other men's industry, and fatten upon the plunder of the public." Thus, right and left, without respect of parties, does wit deal its blows wherever they are deserved. Weak, unthinking benevolence is thus taken to pieces by Sydney Smith:—"The English are a calm, reflecting nation; they will give time and money when they are convinced, but they love dates, names, and certificates. In the midst of the most heart-rending narratives, Bull inquires the day of the month, the year of our Lord, the name of the parish, and the counter-sign of three or four respectable housekeepers. After these affecting circumstances have been given, he can no longer hold out, but gives way to the kindness of his nature—puffs, blubbers, and subscribes." The practice of duelling is thus held up to ridicule in Carlyle's "*Sartor Resartus*:"—"Two little visual spectra of men, hovering with insecure enough cohesion, in the midst of the unfathomable, and to dissolve therein at any rate very soon, make pause at the distance of twelve paces asunder, whirl round, and simultaneously, by the cunningest mechanism, explode one another into dissolution, and off-hand become air and non-extant. The little spitfires! Nay, I think the angels must needs laugh outright, could such a thing be, to see our wondrous manikins here below."

To describe and illustrate the various forms which wit and humour assume would require a volume.

Fantastic and innumerable are their shapes. Simile and metaphor,—odd mixtures of words and ideas,—irony, raillery, sarcasm, satire,—the mock-heroic, the sparkling burlesque, the absurd exaggeration, the broad farce, the titillating drollery,—mockery, ridicule, parody, epigrams, puns,—in these and many other forms do wit and humour delight to disport themselves. Very beautifully has Milton depicted the mirthful train in his “*L’Allegro*”—a portion of which I have already quoted:—

“But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclep’d Euphrosyne,
And, by men, heart-easing Mirth ;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek ;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe.”

Leaving to curious and learned investigation the recondite shapes that wit and humour assume, I shall only aim at furnishing a few examples of their more common forms. The simile is one of the most ordinary vehicles for bringing incongruous ideas together. Sydney Smith, in some remarks on the

habits of the sloth, says—"He moves suspended, rests suspended, sleeps suspended, and, in fact, passes his life in suspense, *like a young clergyman distantly related to a bishop.*" Sheridan makes one of the characters in his farce of "St Patrick's Day," remonstrate thus against the impropriety of her friend marrying a soldier :—"To want a husband, that may wed you to-day, and be sent goodness knows where before night ; then, in a twelvemonth perhaps, to come home, *like a Colossus*, with one leg at New York and the other at Chelsea Hospital." The same witty writer compares a Jew who had forsworn his faith, and "had not had time to get a new one," to "a dead wall standing between church and synagogue, or *the blank leaves between the Old and New Testament.*" Præd has the following witty simile :—

"I think that love is like a play,
Where tears and smiles are blended ;
Or like a faithless April day,
Whose shine with shower is ended ;
Like Colnbrook pavement, rather rough ;
Like trade, exposed to losses ;
And like a Highland plaid, all stuff,
And very full of crosses."

The conversation of Robert Hall abounded at times with the keenest sarcasm. Speaking of Dr Ryland, he exclaimed—"Why, sir, Dr Ryland's all piety—all piety together, sir. If there were not room in heaven, God would turn out an archangel

for him." Porson's criticism on Gibbon's Rome is a specimen of the most biting sarcasm:—"His style is emphatic and expressive; his periods harmonious. His reflections are often just and profound; he pleads eloquently for the rights of mankind and the duty of toleration; nor does his humanity slumber *except when women are ravished and the Christians persecuted*. Though his style is in general correct and elegant, he sometimes draws out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. In endeavouring to avoid vulgar terms, he too frequently dignifies trifles, and clothes common thoughts in a dress that would be rich enough for the noblest ideas. In short, we are too often reminded of that great man Mr Puff, the auctioneer, whose manner was so inimitably fine that 'he had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael.'" The description in "Hudibras," of certain sour-minded religionists belongs to the same class:—

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to;
Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipp'd God for spite."

There is no species of wit that palls upon us so soon as parody, or which requires less genius; yet when attempted by a man of true humour, the result is exceedingly amusing. The "Rejected Addresses" belong to this class; and every one knows how

laughter-provoking are those imitations of the respective styles of our great poets. Quotations from such well-known productions are needless. Almost every popular poem is sure to be parodied, no matter how lofty its subject. Longfellow's "Hiawatha" seems to have been peculiarly potent in provoking parodies. Here is one, for example, on the adage that "Misfortunes never come single:"—

" Never jumps a sheep that's frighten'd,
Over any fence whatever,
Over wall, or fence, or timber,
But a second follows after,
And a third upon the second,
And a fourth and fifth, and so on,—
First a sheep and then a dozen,
Till they all, in quick succession,
One by one, have got clear over ;
So misfortunes, almost always,
Follow after one another ;
Seem to watch each other always,
When they see the tail uplifted,
In the air the tail uplifted,
As one sorrow leapeth over,
So they follow, thicker, faster,
Till the air of earth seems darken'd."

Daniel O'Connell's famous parody on the well-known lines,

" Three poets in three different ages born," &c., &c.,

is admirable of its kind. The three Colonels referred to are Sibthorp, Percival, and Verner: the first noted for his enormous beard, in which the man was almost

lost ; the others for their freedom from all hairy appendages :—

“Three Colonels, in three distant counties born,
 Lincoln, Armagh, and Sligo did adorn—
 The first in matchless impudence surpass’d,
 The next in bigotry,—in both the last ;
 The force of nature could no farther go,—
 To beard the third, she shaved the other two.”

Southey’s “Curse of Kehama” is also amusingly parodied in Barham’s “Ingoldsby Legends,” in the malediction pronounced by the Cardinal upon the Jackdaw of Rheims, that had stolen his ring :—

“The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
 He call’d for his candle, his bell, and his book,
 In holy anger and pious grief,
 He solemnly cursed that rascally thief ;
 He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed,
 From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head ;
 He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
 He should dream of the devil and wake in a fright ;
 He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking,
 He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking ;
 He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying,
 He cursed him in walking, in riding, and flying,
 He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying ;—
 Never was heard such a terrible curse ;
 But what gave rise
 To no little surprise,
 Nobody seem’d one penny the worse.”

The same author has parodied the “Burial of Sir John Moore :”—

“Not a sous had he got, not a guinea or note,
 And he look’d confoundedly flurried,
 As he bolted away without paying his shot,
 And the landlady after him hurried.

- “ We saw him again at dead of night,
When home from the club returning ;
We twigg’d the Doctor beneath the light
Of the gas lamps brilliantly burning.
- “ All bare and exposed to the midnight dews,
Reclined in the gutter we found him ;
And he lay like a gentleman taking his snooze,
With his martial cloak around him.
- “ The Doctor ’s as drunk as a piper, we said,
And we managed a shutter to borrow ;
We raised him, and sigh’d at the thought that his head
Would consumedly ache on the morrow.
- “ We bore him home and put him to bed,
And we told his wife and daughter
To give him next morning a couple of red
Herrings and soda water.
- “ Loudly they talk’d of his money that ’s gone,
And his lady began to upbraid him ;
But little he reck’d, if they let him snore on,
’Neath the counterpane just as we laid him.
- “ We tuck’d him in, and had hardly done,
When, beneath the window calling,
We heard the rough voice of a son of a gun
Of a watchman “ one o’clock ” bawling.
- “ Slowly and sadly we all walk’d down
From his room in the uppermost story ;
A rushlight we placed on the cold hearthstone,
And we left him alone in his glory.”

Puns are now almost universally banished from decent society, and condemned as intolerable nuisances. Yet how admirably Hood has worked this vein, and by his fine genius made even punning re-

spectable ! Witness, for example, his ballad of “ Ben Battle : ” —

“ Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
And used to war’s alarms ;
But a cannon ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms.

“ Now as they bore him off the field,
Said he, ‘ Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the forty-second foot.’

“ The army surgeons made him limbs,
Said he, ‘ They’re only pegs ;
But they’re as wooden members quite
As represent my legs.’

“ Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray ;
So he went to pay her his devoirs
When he devour’d his pay.

“ Now when he call’d on Nelly Gray
She made him quite a scoff,
And when she saw his wooden legs
Began to take them off.

“ ‘ O Nelly Gray, O Nelly Gray,
Is this your love so warm ?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform.’

“ Said she, ‘ I loved a soldier once,
But he was blithe and brave ;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave.

“ ‘ Before you had those timber toes
Your love I did allow ;
But then you know you stand upon
A different footing now.’

- “ ‘O Nelly Gray ! O Nelly Gray !
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty’s call I left my legs
In Badajoz *breaches* !’
- “ ‘Why, then,’ said she, ‘you’ve lost the feet
Of legs in war’s alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms.’
- “ ‘O false and fickle Nelly Gray !
I know why you refuse :
Though I’ve no feet, some other man
Is standing in my shoes.
- “ ‘I wish I ne’er had seen your face ;
But now a long farewell !
For you will be my death—alas !
You will not be my Nell !’
- “ Now when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got,
And life was such a burden grown,
It made him take a knot.
- “ So round his melancholy neck
A rope he did entwine,
And for his second time in life
Enlisted in the Line.
- “ One end he tied around a beam,
And then removed his pegs ;
And as his legs were off—of course
He soon was off his legs.
- “ And there he hung till he was dead
As any nail in town ;
For though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down.
- “ A dozen men sat on his corpse
To find out why he died ;
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside.”

I can quote only one other specimen from the sparkling pages of Hood. It belongs to no particular species of the ludicrous, but is a mixture of the comic, the witty, and the humorous. It is entitled "The Bachelor's Dream:"—

"My pipe is lit, my grog is mix'd,
 My curtains drawn, and all is snug ;
 Old Puss is in her elbow-chair,
 And Tray is sitting on the rug.
 Last night I had a curious dream,
 Miss Susan Bates was Mistress Mogg—
 What d'ye think of that, my cat ?
 What d'ye think of that, my dog ?

"She look'd so fair, she sang so well,
 I could but woo, and she was won ;
 Myself in blue, the bride in white,
 The ring was placed, the deed was done !
 Away we went in chaise-and-four,
 As fast as grinning boys could flog—
 What d'ye think, &c.

"What loving *tête-à-têtes* to come !
 But *tête-à-têtes* must still defer !
 When Susan came to live with me,
 Her mother came to live with her !
 With sister Belle she could not part ;
 But all *my* ties had leave to jog—
 What d'ye think, &c.

"The mother bought a pretty Poll—
 A monkey too, what work he made !
 The sister introduced a beau—
 My Susan brought a favourite maid,
 She had a tabby of her own,
 A snappish mongrel, christen'd Gog—
 What d'ye think, &c.

“The monkey bit, the parrot scream’d,
 All day the sister strumm’d and sung ;
 The petted maid was such a scold,
 My Susan learn’d to use her tongue ;
 Her mother had such wretched health,
 She sat and croak’d like any frog—
 What d’ye think, &c. ;

“No longer Deary, Duck, and Love,
 I soon came down to simple ‘M’ !
 The very servants cross’d my wish,
 My Susan let me down to them ;
 The poker hardly seem’d my own,
 I might as well have been a log—
 What d’ye think, &c.

“My clothes, they were the queerest shape !
 Such coats and hats she never met !
 My ways they were the oddest ways !
 My friends were such a vulgar set !
 Poor Tomkinson was snubb’d and huff’d,
 She could not bear that Mister Blogg—
 What d’ye think, &c.

“At times we had a spar, and then
 Mamma must mingle in the song ;
 The sister took a sister’s part,—
 The maid declared her master wrong ;
 The parrot learn’d to call me ‘Fool’ !
 My life was like a London fog—
 What d’ye think, &c.

“My Susan’s taste was superfine,
 As proved by bills that had no end ;
 I never had a decent coat,
 I never had a coin to spend.
 She forced me to resign my club,
 Lay down my pipe, retrench my grog—
 What d’ye think, &c.

“Now, was not that an awful dream
 For one who single is and snug—

With Pussy in the elbow-chair,
And Tray reposing on the rug?
If I must totter down the hill,
'Tis safest done without a clog—
What d'ye think of that, my cat?
What d'ye think of that, my dog?"

In closing this address, I can barely refer to one familiar form of the ludicrous, which has obtained, for some unknown reason, the name of "bull," and is most frequently met with in Ireland—the land where wit is most sparkling and most relished. The "bull" involves a blunder, in which some ludicrous incongruity lurks. It has been defined as "the exact counterpart of a witticism. Instead of discovering real relations which are not apparent, it admits apparent relations which are not real." "I will make her," says Sir Lucius O'Trigger of his mistress, "Lady O'Trigger, and a good husband into the bargain." A gentleman, in speaking of somebody's wife, regretted that she had no children. "Ah!" said a medical man present on the occasion, "to have no children is a great misfortune, but I have remarked that it is hereditary in some families." Sir Boyle Roche's "bulls" will transmit his name and fame to an admiring posterity. "Sir, I would give up half, nay the whole of the constitution, to preserve the remainder." Hearing that Admiral Howe was in quest of the French, he remarked, somewhat plea-

santly, that the Admiral would "sweep the French fleet off the face of the earth." Writing to a friend, in troublous times, he said—"You may judge of our state, when I tell you that I write this with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other." It was he who denounced, in withering language, the apostate politician, who "turned his back upon himself." His invitation to the gentleman on his travels was hospitable and well meant, but equivocal—"I hope, my lord, if ever you come within a mile of my house you will stay *there* all night." Ludicrously bovine, too, was his rebuke to the shoemaker, when getting shoes for his gouty feet—"I told you to make one longer than the other, and instead of that you have made one smaller than the other; the very opposite." "Bulls," however, are not wholly confined to the fertile Hibernian mind; there is also a small Scottish variety. It is related of Lord Polkemmet that he refused to let the dentist insert his finger in his mouth, saying, "Na, ye'll bite me." A bovine tendency ran in the noble Lord's family; for his grandson, when canvassing a borough, refused to take luncheon from an elector, on the ground "that it would be treating." When Miss Edgeworth published her "Essay on Irish Bulls," it is said that an English agricultural society ordered fifty copies, under the impression that it was a treatise on

cattle - breeding. Here was a practical English "bull."

On the whole, then, I think we are justified in concluding that it is legitimate and desirable, at times, to hold converse with the ludicrous element of existence ; that our tempers and dispositions are thereby sweetened, our charity enlarged, and the heavy pressure of life's cares lightened. In life's rough journey the ludicrous is a kind of *buffer*, to break the rude shocks we have to encounter, and save us from unpleasant collision with stern realities. Not only so ; but it multiplies the sympathetic cords that bind us to our brothers, lifts the lowly into our regards, and leads us to exercise more love and less hatred. Our true humourists must therefore be ranked among our best benefactors ; they not only call forth our smiles, but add to our charity, kindness, and happiness, and shed a light and warmth around our whole being. A really humorous writer must necessarily be a warm-hearted, genial sort of man, tolerant in his ways of looking at men and things, and without bitterness or harshness. Take, for example, that sweetest and most delicate of humourists—Oliver Goldsmith. Could the heart that conceived and the hand that drew the "Vicar of Wakefield" be other than the gentle, loving hand and heart of a brother ? Hence, if you find in a man a large endowment of

wit and humour, so that he can enjoy the ludicrous and laugh heartily, you may expect to find him honest, sincere, and free from malignity. On the other hand, if you find a man incapable of perceiving the ridiculous, averse to all mirthfulness, and without heartiness in his laughter, you had better not become too intimate with him. Hear the author of "*Sartor Resartus*" on this point:—"No one who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad. How much lies in laughter, the cipher-key wherewith we decipher the whole man! Some men wear an everlasting barren simper; in the smile of others lies a cold glitter, as of ice; the fewest are able to laugh what can be called laughing, but only sniff, and titter, and snigger from the throat outwards—or at best produce some whiffing, husky cachinnation, as if they were laughing through wool; of none such comes good. The man who cannot laugh is not only fit for treason's stratagems and spoils, but his whole life is already a treason and a stratagem."

Let no man fancy, then, that wit and humour are mere contemptible frivolities, to be shunned by all wise and sober men; on the contrary, they are the very salt of existence. Jeremy Taylor says "we may well be refreshed by a clean and brisk discourse, as by the air of Campanian wines, and our faces and

our heads may well be anointed and look pleasant with wit, as with the fat of the balsam tree." Let not the pompous, the solemn, or sour-minded turn away from such things, as being vain or contemptible. Be assured that length of face by no means implies longitude of wisdom, and that gravity does not always veil an oracle. Genuine wit implies no small amount of wisdom and culture, and, as Sydney Smith says, "is commonly accompanied by many other talents of every description, and ought to be considered as a strong evidence of a fertile and superior understanding." To name the greatest humourists would be to enumerate some of the ablest and wisest men that have ever lived. What great reform has ever yet made way in the world without the aid of wit and humour? What countless services they have rendered in putting down impudence and hypocrisy, in detecting pretence and pomposity, in collaring solemn imbecility and varnished scoundrelism, and hurling them to the dust-bin! How much we owe our great humourists of former times, and of the present day, who have turned their batteries against "old opinions, rags, and tatters," that have had their day; and who have pointed their guns against the vile and the bad—against falsity and foolishness in all their forms! I am quite aware of the abuses into which wit and humour may

run. What good thing is there that may not be abused? If they be not mingled with higher qualities, and directed by right principles, they will but corrupt head and heart, and cause wide-spread mischief. There is no more contemptible character than the professed wit, whose vanity shews itself through his painful efforts to be always funny and amusing; and the shallowness of whose understanding appears in his uneasy attempts at humour. There is nothing we should more heartily unite in denouncing and repelling than witty attacks directed against purity, truth, virtue, or the solemnities of religion. Let us drive away with scorn and contempt the man who assails with the shafts of wit the wise, the good, the holy, and who aims at bringing into contempt what the heart of humanity pronounces sacred. Let us warn the light fool that profanity cannot be permitted to tread the solemn aisles of the temple of religion, and that wit employed against the cause of morality and piety is a flagrant abuse of one of God's kind gifts. But, in the words of Sydney Smith, "when wit is combined with sense and information; when it is softened by benevolence, and restrained by strong principle; when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it—who can be witty and something better than witty—who loves honour, justice, decency, religion ten thousand times better

than wit,—wit is then a beautiful and delightful part of our nature. Genuine and innocent wit is surely the very flavour of the mind. Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food ; but God has given us wit and flavour, and brightness and laughter, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and 'to charm his pained steps over the burning marle.'"

LECTURE THE FOURTH.

ENGLISH, 'SCOTCH, AND AMERICANS.

ANCHORED off the coast of Europe, within sight of its shores, is the most famous island on which the sun now looks down. Its name is Great Britain. Between its furthest extremities, it is not more than eight hundred miles in length, and some three hundred in average breadth; and is thus about equal in area to the States of Georgia and South Carolina—two of those now struggling for independence. The population, including the six or seven millions of Ireland, is somewhere about twenty-nine millions. On this little sea-girt isle, which is a mere speck on the map of the world, a race has grown up and developed itself during the last thousand years which, in modern times, has proved itself more potent in guiding the current of civilisation, and influencing the world's destinies, than any other now extant. Confessedly, the

British race lead the van in the onward march of the nations; and only one other nation—the French—can pretend to share with them in this honour. The northern and southern portions of the island—Scotland and England—were at first at variance, and wasted each other's strength in fierce contests; but they have long since been reconciled, have entered into partnership, and acted together for the common weal. Now, consider what this race has achieved, in a thousand years of working and fighting. An island which, when they entered on possession, was mostly forest and swamp, has been transformed into a garden, incomparably the best cultivated and most productive on the face of the earth. The rich treasures beneath its surface they have explored and dragged up to the sunlight; and, by the aid of these, they have become the manufacturers and clothiers of the world. They have built up mighty London, to which, in point of wealth, magnitude, and population, no other capital approaches. They have created Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, and other great hives of industry, in which the strokes fall so fast and incessant on the anvil of labour. They have won the dominion of the sea; for centuries their flag "has braved the battle and the breeze;" and to-day it is "Britannia rules the waves." Swarm after swarm has left the parent hive, and colonised America and Australia, laying the foundations of new empires in these distant regions,

and, besides, peopling numberless isles of the sea. A great empire has been conquered in India; and when recently all but lost, they grasped it more vigorously than ever, and subdued it again. This strong-handed, resolute, toiling race has also proved itself mighty in war; and, from Cressy to Waterloo and Inkerman, can point to a proud array of victories. In the world of mind, too, great have been their achievements. In science, they boast of the great names of Bacon, Newton, Herschel; in the mechanical arts, they name Brindley, Watt, Stephenson; in literature, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Burns, Scott, Wordsworth. With the exception of Germany, there is no other literature so rich as that of England. Look at this side of the Atlantic, where England's greatest off-shoot, the United States, some eighty years ago, was so strong and full-grown that they insisted on setting up in life on their own account; and how they have thriven, at what an amazing pace they have advanced, we all know. Already, in their towering ambition, they proclaim that the New World is their own.

Now, the people that have done all this, and left their traces so broadly on the face of the earth, though marked by distinctive peculiarities, are from the same stock, and are virtually the same race. The Scotch are just the English "raised," as the Yankees say, on a poorer soil and in a colder clime than those of England, and subsisting more largely

on oatmeal and barley bread than their Southern brethren. And though in America the great human sandwich has more variety of mixture, drawn from Ireland, Germany, and other portions of the Old World, yet its spirit and substance, its might and energy, all that make it a nation, are Anglo-Saxon. Now, to sum up, there are at this moment on the earth sixty millions of English descent and language, and they are governing a population of two hundred and forty-five millions of souls. This calculation includes the United States; but, exclusive of these, there are forty millions of pure British stock, and they are ruling two hundred and twenty-two millions, or a fifth of the population of the globe. So predominant have this strong-backed, earth-subduing race become. To-day, so far from declining, they are as strong as ever,—forging their Armstrong guns, launching their iron-plated frigates, and bullying the world, as in former times. It is worth considering how this man-conquering race arose, and what were the primitive elements out of which it was constructed.

Geologists inform us that Britain was once joined to the continent of Europe; and that long before man's day on earth, where at present the submerged wires of the electric telegraph lie, connecting the French and English coasts, a valley extended, covered with willows and palm-trees. Among the branches of these trees extinct owls and other birds roosted;

and under their foliage the palæotherium, mastodon, and forgotten races of elephants found shelter. As other lands arose, the displaced waters of the sea rushed into this valley, and transformed it into St George's Channel,—making Britain an island, but leaving her admirably placed for communication with east and west—the very centre of the world. The first inhabitants of the island, of whom history makes any record, were the ancient Britons. But there is unquestionable evidence to shew that these ancient Britons were by no means the first inhabitants of the island; that they had their predecessors, and these their predecessors again. History can tell us nothing of the early inhabitants of Britain, from the time when Pharaoh built the first pyramid, or Cecrops founded Athens, or Joshua captured Jericho, till the landing of Julius Cæsar at Deal. Yet during this immense period, or at least some portion of it, there were unquestionably inhabitants in England and Scotland; and though we know not to what race they belonged, yet recently a little light has been thrown on what was utter darkness before. A diligent examination of ancient tombs and their contents has made it clear that no less than three different human formations preceded the ancient Britons. At all events, antiquarians have clearly established that there were three distinct epochs in the life of this pre-historic race—the ages of stone, of bronze,

and of iron. The stone period is so called because the men who then lived were acquainted with no other weapons or utensils save such as were constructed out of stone. During the bronze age, we have evidence that the inhabitants were acquainted with tin and copper, and constructed vessels and weapons of bronze, a compound of these two metals. The iron age is so called because those who figured in it knew and employed iron. As this period closed, history began to indite her earliest records. The aboriginal Caledonian and Englishman of the stone age must have been an uncouth savage. His dwelling was a hole excavated in the ground, and roofed in with stones. Armed with a ball of flint attached to the end of a thong, he lay in wait for his prey, and with this rude weapon struck down deer and other animals. The remains of the stone formation, treasured in the British Museum, shew that the first step he took in an upward direction was in the construction of a hatchet. This weapon was at first a sharp stone fastened to a wooden handle by a leathern thong. But a great invention followed—a method of piercing the stone, so as to be fastened on the wooden handle. Some primeval genius—some Arkwright or Watt of this era—worked out this idea, and soon the oldest trees in the British forests began to fall under the blows of the stone hatchets. Knife-blades and arrow-heads of flint,

wedges and scissors, followed ; and the rudiments of civilisation began to appear. However disagreeable, we are compelled to reckon the unkempt savages of this age among our poor relations. They were not, perhaps, very respectable ; but let us not forget that they were the backwoodsmen whose stout arms first cleared the jungles, and felled the forests, and conquered for us the savage beasts of prey ; and thus laid the foundations of Britain's greatness. Considering their disadvantages, and that they had nothing to provide food with but arrow-heads and stone hatchets, they did great things in smoothing the rough surface of the earth ; and in their poor savage life, they had their human affections, and joys, and sorrows, as we have to-day. They must have belonged to the first wave of human population that overspread the earth, after the dispersion of Babel, and which, after the lapse of ages, at length touched the shores of Britain. Their mouldering remains shew that they were a short, poorly-developed race, with skulls of a low, flat, pyramidal form, powerful jaws, but small foreheads. Such were the first inhabitants of Britain. Dr Pritchard gives the name of Ugro-Tatars to a group of nations whose principal types are the Mongolian, the Tungrian, the Tatar, and the Turkish. All indicates that the Ugro-Tatars, with whom are connected certain hyperborean races,—the Samoyedes, the Lapons, and the Esquimaux,—constitute one of the oldest branches

of the human race. This primitive race spread over Europe, and formed the first children of the soil in many parts where they settled. It has been inferred from various evidence, chiefly philological, that the aborigines of the United Kingdom belonged to one family of this primeval race, called the Lapons. They formed the primary strata of population in the British Isles, to which has been given the name of the stone formation.

The first inhabitants were ignorant of the art of manipulating metals. A new epoch dawned when copper and tin were discovered, and bronze, the result of their intermixture, came into use. The first step was the insertion of a spike of this metal in a hilt of split wood; and, after many experiments and long processes, a socket for receiving the handle was manipulated. This was the first metal tool—a vast advance in human progress. In the British Museum may now be seen the first stone hammers employed in the old copper mines in breaking the mineral, and the first moulds employed to run the metal and give it shape—objects of profound interest to the philosophic mind. What a stretch between these and the Nasmyth hammer and iron foundry of the nineteenth century! During the bronze period, rude tools were applied to the cultivation of the soil, primeval houses were constructed, and the ladies of those days had their fashions in bronze bracelets, collars, and head

ornaments. Increased comforts, and improved means of attaining them, secured an advance in the physical development of the race ; and the men of the bronze period, though still marked by a wild animal life, were of a powerful mould, and, doubtless, looked back with contempt on their predecessors of the stone age. The skeleton of one of these bronze men, which has been preserved, shews that the living person must have been at least six feet six inches in height. The teeth are found in excellent preservation yet, shewing that dentists and dyspepsia were unknown in those primitive times. Gradually the bronze age passed into that of iron. Iron superseded all else in the construction of instruments of industry and weapons of war. Civilisation rapidly became more complicated and elevated. The horse was tamed ; strongholds were built ; the human skull enlarged ; the facial angle increased ; the eyebrows retired, and the forehead advanced ; and at length the true Celtic head appeared. The close of the iron period brings us up to the age of tradition—the times of Macbeth, St Patrick, St Keernan, and the Northmen. Then dawns the historic period—the ancient Britons and the Roman invasion.

It is highly probable that the last of these prehistoric men—our poor relations of the iron times—were overwhelmed by the advance of a new migration. This fresh wave of the great human deluge

consisted of the Celts, or Sidonides, who now entered and spread themselves over Britain. The origin of all races is lost in the obscure mists of the past. Of the Celts, we only know that their cradle was the sunny East, and that, like all the other great waves of population, they swept on towards the West. Their language, which contains traces of Sanscrit, indicates their Oriental origin. The race of Japhet sent out two great streams of migration—the Celtic first, then the German. Thus the Celtic is the oldest blood in the world ; so that, as far as age goes, no man need be ashamed of having it in his veins. At an early period the Celts were a wide-spread race, having tribes numerous and powerful in France, Spain, and the middle and south of Europe ; while of Britain and Ireland they had exclusive possession. Until the birth of Christ, there was no people north of the Alps who could compare with them in the arts of civilised life. Gradually the whole of the British Isles were occupied by this great race. The Irish Celt, a distinct family, reached Ireland by traversing Spain and crossing the Bay of Biscay. From Ireland, in the third century, they passed into Western Scotland and the Isle of Man. The Caledonian Celt held the northern portion of Scotland, and the modern Highlanders are his descendants. The British Celt, or ancient Briton, possessed England, and is now represented by the Welsh and Cornish. The bulk

of the population of Ireland, with the exception of the north, are the posterity of the Irish Celt. Thus the modern Welsh, Highlanders, Irish, and Manxmen are all branches of the Celtic stem, and in language, character, and many personal peculiarities have a strong family likeness. There seems to have been a closer affinity between the Caledonian and Irish Celt than either of these and the British Celt; for we find that the Highlander, speaking his Gaelic, is understood by the Irish-speaking Celt; while the language of a Welshman is wholly unintelligible to both the former. The Gael and the Irishman can also partially understand the Manxman. A brilliant race were the Celts, full of energy and genius, warlike, fond of music, of the song and the dance. They contributed to the literature of the world the songs of Merlin, and the graceful mythology of Arthur and his Table Round. The genius of Tennyson has recently, in his "Idylls of the King," embodied some of their traditions in his melodious verse. They left behind them those funereal monuments called *cromlechs*, (vulgarly, Druidic stones,) which were their sepulchres; and Stonehenge, which is still a puzzle to the antiquarian. How ineffaceable is race! "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" Could you, by any amount of combing, washing, or training, transmute the black man into the white? The Celtic branch of Japhet's family, that left the sunny East so many

centuries since, retains, in its modern representatives, its distinguishing characteristics in spite of change of clime and altered circumstances. In their warlike tendencies, their dislike to the practical conquests of industry, their attachment to fishing and pastoral pursuits, their mercurial temperament, their joyous, thoughtless disposition, that prefers present enjoyment to future good,—in their passion, gaiety, fierce loves and hates,—do we not see traces of their Oriental origin—of the clime of the sun, the cradle of their race? Compare Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland with the north of Ireland, the west and south of Scotland, and England,—the lands of the Saxon,—and what a striking difference you observe in the inhabitants and in the countries themselves! With all their brilliancy, the modern Celts, it must be admitted, are not thrifty,—do not, as a general rule, get on in the world,—have not the love of hard work and the talent for accumulation possessed by the slower Saxons. Like the Easterns, they like to enjoy. Eloquent, brave, sprightly, witty, but not worldly and prosperous, they earn and spend, and fail in grappling successfully with the practical realities of life. Are we to refer their peculiarities to the warm sun of the East, that land where

“The cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime;
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into softness, now madden to crime?”

The stern Roman landed in Britain ; and the Celt, though he fought bravely, went down before the superior military skill and higher civilisation of the Romans. Their defeats were very much owing to an unhappy turn for quarrelling among themselves, for which they have ever been noted ; and not even the presence of imminent danger could keep them united. They could not hold their ground before the iron tread of the Roman legions. It was not, however, the Roman policy to exterminate, but to civilise and govern. At length Roman decline set in ; pressing domestic troubles arose ; and the conqueror retired from Britain, leaving the British Celts to themselves. For them, however, there was no peace. Their thievish, marauding neighbours, the Picts and Scots, assailed them fiercely. The Picts were the Celts of the north of Scotland ; the Scots were a tribe of Celts who had emigrated from Ireland, and seized the south and west of Scotland, and who have given their name to the whole land, though hardly a drop of their blood runs in the veins of the Lowland Scotch, their origin being Saxon. Thus the Celts, as usual, got to fighting among themselves,—the two northern tribes, the Picts and Scots, assailing the southern or ancient Britons. The latter, in an evil day for themselves, implored the aid of another race, the Saxons of Germany, who willingly came to their assistance. These were a totally different

people from any that had yet touched the shores of Britain. They were of the great Teutonic stock, that had spread over most of Germany, and for two hundred and fifty years had fought the Romans, and given them more trouble than any other enemy. A strong-limbed, fierce race were these Saxons, who were destined to form the primary stratum of the present British people. The cradle of this race was Scandinavia—Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Holstein ; from thence they spread along the shores of the Baltic and the banks of the Rhine, and finally pushed their way into Germany, Switzerland, France, Greece, and England. For ages they were the brigands of the sea, pursuing piracy as a profession, and ravaging the shores of Europe. Physically they were, and continue to be, the most powerful race of men in the world. They were distinguished from other races by the fairness of their complexion, their blue eyes, fair hair, large, round heads, lofty stature, and great muscular energy. Compared with the Celt, the Saxon had redder hair ; while the colour of that of the Celt was flaxen. The type of the Celtic skull was narrow and elongated ; the Saxon, short and wide. Of robust, compact build, the Saxon excels the Celt in fullness of chest, width of shoulders, and muscularity of arms ; while his framework is not so developed or so well-proportioned as that of the Celt,—his limbs not being in harmony with the upper part of his body.

Tacitus described them so in his day ; and the pure Anglo-Saxon has the same characteristics at the present hour. In moral qualities the Saxon differed greatly from the Celt. Slower, less impulsive, and less brilliant than the Celt, the Saxon had an indomitable pride that rendered him superior to all the freaks of fortune, a self-reliance that made him firm and persevering in his enterprises, and a self-esteem that gave him a conscious superiority over all others, and forbade the idea of his ever being enslaved. A late French writer says : “ If you wish to form an idea of the beauty of the Saxon type, you must look at the female. She is remarkable for light hair, blue eyes, coral lips, cheeks ruddy as the flowers to which they are so frequently compared, a skin as white and transparent as alabaster, delicate features, arms admirably modelled, a perfect bust, and an air of flourishing health, yet bearing the stamp of birth. Who cannot recognise a true Saxon woman by her walk ? *incessu patuit dea* : you distinguish in it the movement of a haughty race, independent mistress of itself, and all it thinks proper to subjugate.” Again : “ The character of strength and greatness is found in all the chief cities founded by the Saxon race ; it is reflected even on the creations of industry. In all its labours the Saxon genius aims at the gigantic ; it likes difficulties to overcome ; it sets its pride on conquering the most rebellious facts.” Such, then, were the great race that

were destined to form the stem of the English nation, and to impress on them all their predominant characteristics.

It seems to be a general law of nature, that where two races, unequal in civilisation and force of character, are brought together on the same territory, they do not amalgamate; the weaker goes down and disappears before the stronger. Instead of blending and forming a compound, the inferior race is either exterminated, or slowly retires as the other advances. Such has been the history of the red and white races on the American continent; such, too, was the process when Saxon and Celt met on the soil of Britain. The stronger Saxon prevailed. Fighting desperately, but hopelessly, for a hundred and fifty years, the Celt fell back before his conqueror into the fastnesses of Cornwall, behind the mountain ramparts of Wales, and into the glens of the Highlands. The day of the Celt, as a ruling power, was over. Swarm after swarm arrived: the Jutes, from Jutland seized Kent and Hampshire; the Saxons, from North Germany, and the Angles established themselves in the rest of the island; and the new colonists got the name of Anglo-Saxons. Pushing their way north, they drove before them the Gael, or Caledonian Celt, till he was cooped amid his rocky barriers behind the Grampians, whence, for ages after, he was accustomed to issue forth and make marauding excursions upon his southern op-

pressors. Thus the Saxon race occupied all the Lowlands of Scotland, and the modern Scotch are consequently of the same race as the English. The Scotch tongue is simply a dialect of the Saxon; and the Scottish people are, with some slight intermixtures, thorough Saxons. When we now wish to find the representatives of the British Celt, we must cross the Grampians or sail for the Hebrides, or we must search amid the recesses of the Welsh mountains. In Ireland, the best-preserved Celtic types are to be found in Connaught, or among the athletic peasantry of Connemara. But even in these retreats the expansive power of the ever-advancing Saxon is felt; and the silent invasion of Teutonic civilisation is pushing out the Celtic remnant. Hence the great exodus from Ireland to the New World, and the rapid depopulation of the Highland glens and the northern isles of Scotland.

The invasion of England by the Saxons took place in the fifth century. In the tenth century another conquering race arrived in Britain, and the turn of the Saxon came. These were the Danes, as they are commonly called, another Scandinavian tribe, from Norway and Sweden; of the same race, therefore, as the Saxons. They were the "Vikings," or sea-robbers of those days: their ships swept the ocean; and they were accustomed to pillage, burn, and murder without mercy wherever they came. This

much can be said in defence of piracy—that it was the originator of navigation and commerce. For ages these Danes were in the habit of ravaging the coasts of Britain, carrying terror and destruction wherever they appeared. No doubt the Saxons fought well against the invaders, and at times got the better of the Vikings, who were occasionally made to stay where they landed, much against their will. There is a story told of some of them being caught, on one occasion, by the Saxons, who insisted strongly on their remaining; and in order to make sure of this, they divested the captured Danes of the one essential and perfectly fitting garment, indispensable in the mildest climates,—the covering which nature, not the tailor, makes up—namely, the skin; they stripped them of this under-clothing, and nailed it on the church-door, as farmers do a dead crow, in order to be a terror to evil-doers of the Viking brood. In modern days, the churchwardens were repairing and beautifying an old Saxon church in a certain English village; and, among other things, they thought the door badly crusted, and would be all the better for scraping. One man, who had heard the old story, happened to be possessed of a microscope, and had the curiosity to examine the under part of the crust. There was no mistake about it; “it was a genuine historical document”—the skin of the old Scandinavian Viking, who had unwillingly left this record of

himself behind. These were doubtless rough times ; yet the foundations of all that is now so fair and pleasant were laid by these coarse hands. The Danes, it is well known, triumphed for a short time, and some of their kings even occupied the throne of England. Considerable numbers of them settled along the eastern and northern coasts, and, intermingling with the Anglo-Saxons, formed no inconsiderable ingredient in the compound British race. The Danes were daring and skilful sailors ; and no doubt it is a dash of their blood that has helped to make modern Britons the great sea-kings, discoverers, and explorers of the nineteenth century. It was reserved for this wave-ruling race to wrench from the Frost-king the secret of the North-west Passage, and to follow the Nile to its mysterious source. In Scotland, and all along the east coast of England, there was a large admixture of Danish blood ; and to this day, in the manners, appearance, and language of the population, there are unmistakable traces of Scandinavianism. The family of which Nelson came is said to have had a large share of the Danish element, and Hugh Miller was Scandinavian.

In reality, however, the Danes, though they subjugated and ravaged, were unable to conquer the tough, plucky Saxons, who had far too much bottom in them to be pushed off the soil where they had settled, by the Scandinavian sea-rovers. Altogether,

the Danes did not hold their ground above half a century in England. The Saxons watched their opportunity ; rose, killed a good many of the Vikings, and let the rest remain on the condition that they became Christians and conducted themselves properly. But presently new troubles arose for the Saxons ; a more terrible foe than the Danes assailed them. This great race, with such a destiny before it, must be trained amid toils and troubles—savage enemies without, and turmoils at home. No good comes of a man or people unless he and they have difficulties to overcome,—difficulties that will strain the muscles and tax brain and heart. The best men and the best races have been developed and trained amid hardships and sore toils and struggles. Did the wind always blow gently from the south, what a poor race of sailors we should have ! It needs the howling blasts of the north to breed hard Englishmen ; for—

“ 'Tis the black north-easter,
 Through the snow-storm hurl'd,
 Drives our English hearts of oak
 Seaward round the world !
 Come as came our fathers,
 Heralded by thee,
 Conquering from the eastward,
 Lords by land and sea.
 Come, and strong within us
 Stir the Viking's blood,
 Bracing brain and sinew ;
 Blow, thou wind of God !”

The Saxons had no reason to complain of the want of rough north-easters. They had hardly done with the Danes, when another savage host leaped on their shores. In 1066 the Normans, under William Conqueror, arrived. These Normans came from Normandy, a province in France ; but in reality they, too, were Scandinavian in their origin. One hundred and fifty years before, a host of the Norse pirates made their way to France, burning, slaying, and pillaging as they went. They got hold of Normandy and settled there, adopted the French language, partly abandoned their wild habits, and became Christians after a fashion ; and in the course of a century and a half got so combed and polished that their barbarian chiefs had become Norman knights and barons. They had intermingled a good deal with the French Celts, so that both Scandinavian and Celtic blood ran in their veins. Some sixty thousand of these Normans, or French Danes, with some Flemings and Walloons, now landed in England. They were far from being a reputable band ; in fact, if the truth must be told, they were sadly addicted to robbery and homicide. We all know the result. The battle of Hastings gave the crown of England to Norman William ; the Saxons were vanquished ; and if you wish to know how their conquerors burned, wasted, harried, and murdered the poor Saxons, read Thierry's *History of the Norman Conquest*." In

the end, however, Saxon pluck and bottom won the day. The conquerors were conquered, though not exactly in battle. The Normans failed to drive out or improve the Saxons "off the face of all creation." On the contrary, they were absorbed by the vanquished ; compelled to adopt their language, laws, and usages ; and at Runnymede we find Saxons dictating their terms to Norman kings. Gradually the conquered race came to be on equal terms with the victors, and were able to build up for the preservation of their liberties the bulwark of the British Constitution. Macaulay tells us that early in the fourteenth century the fusion of the two races was complete, the distinction between Norman and Saxon ceased, and the enmity of the two races disappeared for ever. "Then it was," says the historian, "that the great English people was formed, that the national character began to exhibit those peculiarities which it has ever since retained, and that our fathers became emphatically islanders— islanders not merely in geographical position, but in their politics, their feelings, and their manners. Then first appeared, with distinctness, that constitution which has ever since, through all changes, preserved its identity ; that constitution of which all other free constitutions in the world are copies, and which, in spite of some defects, deserves to be regarded as the best under which any great society has ever existed during many ages." The eloquent his-

torian also tells us that now Britannia's sovereignty of the seas commenced, her common law became a science, and her most ancient colleges were founded.

We see, then, from all that has been said, that the British nation has been formed by a fusion, a most happy fusion, of races. Saxon strength and indomitable energy, Norman chivalry and gallantry, Scandinavian fierceness and daring,—these are the elements that have entered into the composition; and, like the ingredients of the witches' caldron in “*Macbeth*,” they have made the mixture “slab and good.” A thousand years elapsed, after the arrival of the Saxons, before the incoherent mass became thoroughly fused, so as to be moulded into that national type which now marks the originality of the race, and distinguishes the Englishman from all others in regard to external appearance and internal faculties. I know of no grander study than the wonderful methods by which Providence has moulded and developed this race, who were destined to influence so widely the industry, the material progress, the government, the literature, and the religion of mankind. By what a vast chain of events, through what catastrophes, revolutions, wars, struggles of races has He, whose hand is discernible in all history, made “all things work together” for the production of this strong, rich, varied race, who for centuries to come will guide the material and moral progress of humanity! Great has

been the stroke of work done by this people in the four hundred years that have passed since they attained their majority; but if we look at the United States, the British Colonies of North America, Australia, India, and Britain herself, can we doubt that a great future lies before the Anglo-Saxon race? No doubt, like all their precursors, they will have their day,—their rise, decline, and fall,—and doubtless they are preparing the way for a higher race, who will one day be studying their remains, and tracing the lines of their peculiar type of civilisation. But that day must be far distant. Not yet has the star of Anglo-Saxondom culminated.

Before passing on, let us carefully note that the mixture of people which took place on the soil of Britain was not the fusion of *different races* of men. Saxon, Dane, Norman, as we have seen, were but branches of one stem—the Teutonic, which was originally Gothic in its origin. All three, we have learned, came from Scandinavia. She was the true nursing-mother of the English race. When the Saxon from Germany, the Dane from Norway, and the Norman from France, met and mingled on the soil of England, it was in reality a union of three branches of the same family, not a fusion of different races. There were strong family affinities in the blood before; and hence the easy and happy union that took place under the genial skies of England, as

of kindred long separated. Races that are totally distinct do not easily amalgamate; and if, by the force of circumstances, such intermixture be accomplished, the result is not happy,—their progeny is neither an improved nor a permanent variety of the species. The offspring of mixed races are found to degenerate and tend towards extinction. It appears to be the order of Providence that each race should be endowed with peculiar gifts and instincts, and a special type of intellect; and should thus be fitted to play a certain part in the drama of existence. Each has to work out its destiny apart,—not to lose its individuality in others; and so accomplish its share in the work of the world. This law, however, does not apply to the crossing of varieties of the same race, as in the case of the English. Provided the original stem be the same, the branches may form a happy and friendly union; nay, this variety in unity will be a decided improvement, producing various shades of character, and a corresponding ramification in the resources of civilisation. Distinct races, on the other hand, do not often freely intermingle. The Celt and the Saxon, for example, have never commingled to any extent. In the north of Ireland they have lived side by side for centuries, and the intermixture is quite inconsiderable; and their mutual antipathies, I am sorry to say, are almost as great as ever. So in regard to Scotland, Wales, and

America. In none of these countries do the two races intermingle in any appreciable degree. It is true that the distinguished writer, Dr Wilson, has recently reported a considerable fusion of the red and white races as going on in the back settlements of America; but it remains to be seen whether the resulting variety will be permanent, or is doomed to a rapid extinction.

We are now in a position to glance for a little at this Anglo-Saxon race, and mark a few of their peculiarities and national traits. Very early there was a marked distinction between that branch of the Saxons that occupied North Britain, or the Scotch, and the English branch, that possessed the southern portion of the island. With the instinct of their race, which everywhere points toward independence and self-government, the North Britons formed themselves into a separate kingdom, and, from the days of Bruce, had their own kings and laws. They had their own tongue also, which, says Macaulay, "did not differ from the purest English more than the dialects of Somersetshire and Lancashire differed from each other." They had hard work, however, to maintain their independence against the English monarchs, who were desirous of attaching Scotland as an appendage to their crown. In all history there is no nobler record than the pages which relate the heroic struggle for independence maintained by the

small kingdom of Scotland, with an insignificant population, against a nation far more numerous and powerful. To this day it is the proud boast of the Scot that England was never able to conquer his native land. In vain did English armies sweep over the country, burning and slaying; the Scot would not yield. He proved that he possessed the Saxon toughness—the iron thews and sinews of the race—by the unflinching obstinacy with which he resisted the invader, and guarded his rights. This conflict created that nationality of which every true-born Scot is so proud to-day. The perils through which they passed, the fierce struggles through which they won the victory, endeared to them the soil on which they trod, and linked them to one another with a fervour which is now proverbial as one of their national traits. Shoulder to shoulder, they will everywhere stand by one another to the last; and wherever they wander, they never cease to “love the land of mountain and of flood.” Speaking of the Scotch, Macaulay says, “In perseverance, in self-command, in forethought, in all the qualities which conduce to success in life, the Scots have never been surpassed.” Their mental development, at this time when they were fighting for their national existence, may be judged of from the same historian’s statement. He says, “Though that kingdom was then the poorest in Christendom, it almost vied in every

branch of learning with the most favoured countries. Scotsmen, whose dwellings and whose food were as wretched as the Icelanders' of our time, wrote Latin verses with more than the delicacy of Vida, and made discoveries in science which would have added to the renown of Galileo." Thus this stout, hard-headed race fought their way, and at length joined England on honourable terms, "preserving all their dignity," as Macaulay puts it, "and giving a king instead of taking one." But with a poor soil, and continually harassed and plundered by her Southern neighbour, it is not wonderful that the Scotch, till comparatively recent times, were rather a poor people. They had not the rich, fertile plains of England, on which, with little effort, splendid wheat crops can be raised. Struggling for life and national existence, they could create few manufactures, and little trade. Thus, in wealth, in commerce, and manufactures, in modes of life, Scotland was, in those early days, far behind England, and has not yet overtaken her. Many a sneer has been indulged in by English writers at the poverty of Scotland, and at the wistful looks that all Scotchmen were supposed to cast on the road that led to rich England; but they have forgotten the immense natural advantages enjoyed by their own people. Besides, in addition to repelling Southern invaders, the Scottish Saxon had to deal with the marauding Gael.

of the Highlands, and to keep this very troublesome neighbour in order. How much trouble this job gave may be judged of by the Scottish proverb, "It's ill getting the breeks aff the Highlandman." In days of old, the Highland clansmen were accustomed to make forays on the south, and carry off cattle or any other movables that came in their way, on the principle, I suppose, that

" The mountain sheep were sweeter,
But the valley's sheep were fatter ;
And they therefore thought it meeter
To carry off the latter."

The Southern Scots, finding how vain was the hope of obtaining redress or compensation from those who had nothing, contented themselves with cracking this joke on the breeless condition of the Gael.

If we may judge by the rapidly-extending manufactures and commerce of Scotland, and her splendid system of agriculture, in which she has led the way in all modern improvements, and left all competitors behind, it may be safely asserted that she will speedily be able to bear comparison with England in regard to material prosperity, in proportion to her population. Already she can boast of possessing the second city in the kingdom—Glasgow now ranking next to London in respect to population. We have seen that her people, in the midst of their poverty, were early distinguished for their intellectual prowess and love of learning, no less than for their intolerance of all

oppression, and their resolute independence of character. History proves, I think, that in passionate love of freedom, in stern resistance to all wrong and tyranny, the Scotch have surpassed their brethren of the South. This may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that they have in their veins a larger dash of the Scandinavian blood, derived from the Danes, than the English. Hence, too, they have more fervour and passion ; the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, the fervid energy of the Scotch, had passed into a proverb, as early as the fifteenth century, in continental Europe. No doubt, too, the Gael of the north has contributed some of his hot blood to produce the Scottish temperament. The intellectual tendency of the race has produced that shrewdness which has long been a national trait, and is acknowledged in the epithet “hard-headed Scotchmen,” or, as they describe themselves, “canny Scotch.” The word “canny” is of Scandinavian origin, and the root of it must have been imported in some of the Vikings’ boats. It is derived from the Icelandic *kiaen*,—astute and wary. In the Scotch dialect, its primary signification is “cautious, prudent;” but the fact of its being used to signify all sorts of good qualities shews the high value which the Scotch set upon caution and shrewdness—just as the fact that the French extend the use of the word brave to signify a good fellow proves the high value which *they* set upon *that* quality. When the

Yorkshire man, who has also a good dash of Scandinavian blood in him, in reply to an attempt to *do* him, says, with a knowing wink, "I 'se Yorkshire too;" and the Scotchman, in response to a similar useless effort, remarks, "We 're too far north for that;" it is evident that, whatever other people may think of them, they both consider themselves rather more knowing than the rest of the world. But if the Scot is cautious in what he undertakes, he is proverbially persevering in following up his enterprises. I will not say—quoting from Tennyson's "Princess"—that

"Fierce, and false, and fickle is the South;
And dark, and true, and tender is the North."

Without any invidious comparisons, however, we may assert, and all the world will affirm it, that the Scotch are pre-eminently steady, tenacious, and persevering. According to his own proverb, in breasting the hill Difficulty, "he sets a stout heart to a stae brae," and is sure to win the top. Even in his humour the "canniness" of the Scot appears. Rich, racy, and individual as is Scottish humour, it is generally sly and dry, "canny," and rather caustic, preserving a grave exterior, while laughing internally. Dean Ramsay, in his "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," tells of a Scotchman whose tender toe was trodden on. The offender, whose weight, no doubt, was considerable, said, "I am very sorry, sir—I beg your pardon." "You have muckle need, sir," was the

rejoinder. An Irish beggar, however, surpassed this. An old, gouty gentleman refused him alms; and the beggar soon after managed to swing his crutch, quite accidentally, upon the tender toes of the rich man, whom his prayers failed to move to charity; and then, by way of soothing Dives, he said, "Bless yer honour! if yer heart was as tender as yer toes, it's a tinpenny you'd have been after givin' me." It was the same beggar, I suppose, who, when a newly-married couple were passing him one day, arm in arm, and very happy-looking, in order to touch heart and pocket at the same time, exclaimed, "May the blessing of the Lord, that brings love, and joy, and wealth, and a fine thumping family, follow you all the days of your life." The happy couple passed on without taking the least notice of his supplications, and the beggar added, by way of postscript, "and may they never overtake you." A lady in Scotland, being invited by a friend to dinner, replied that, "if spared, she would be there at the appointed hour." "Oh!" replied the friend, "if you're deid we'll no expect you." This was thoroughly Scotch. Thus it is that the genius of a people breaks out in their humour, which is perhaps the most characteristic thing about them—their very life-juice—the flavour of their being. You may judge of a man's character by what he finds laughable, as truly as by anything else about him. It was a Scotchman who, when his

minister, in catechising, asked him how long Adam stood before he fell, replied, "Till he got a wife;" and then added, "Can ye tell me, sir, how long he stood after that?" The Scotch canniness and slyness come out sometimes in paying a compliment. Thus, (I quote Dean Ramsay,) when wishing to intimate that the worth of a handsome woman outweighs even her beauty, a Scot will say, "She's better than she's bonnie." A Highlander rather ungallantly said of his wife the opposite of this: "She's bonnier than she's better." Mrs Poyser, who is a fine embodiment of rich English humour, explained the drawbacks of marrying late in life in her own homely and ingenious way: "I'm no friend to young fellows marrying afore they know the difference between a crab and an apple; but they may wait owre long." "To be sure," said Mrs Poyser, "if you go past your dinner-time, there'll be little relish o' your meat. You turn it o'er and o'er wi' your fork, and don't eat it after all. You find faut wi' your meat, and the faut's all i' your own stomach."

A long-drawn controversy has been waged between Scotch and English as to which surpasses in intellectual attainments and productions. Each can boast of a list of great men. Ramsay, Burns, and Campbell are set over against Chaucer, Byron, and Shelley; Watt, with his steam-engine, is a Scottish host in himself, equal to Brindley, Stephenson, and Brunel;

Walter Scott is put into the scale opposite Dickens and Thackeray ; while Hume and Macaulay challenge all English competitors in the art of writing history. There is one name, however, that the English are very fond of brandishing ; Scotland, they say, has produced no Shakespeare. I believe it was an Irishman who said that “ he did not see what all this fuss about Shakespeare was for ; ” adding, “ if it had not been for his writings the fellow never would have been heard of.” It is true there is no Scotchman so intellectually tall as grand, old, kingly Shakespeare, to whom we all reverently doff our hats. The Anglo-Saxon race has produced one, and only one, Shakespeare ; the English have not yet sent forth his compeer. He is the finest outgrowth of the old Saxon tree—England’s, and yet Scotland’s, and the world’s. It is true Scotland, whose intellectual life began later than that of England, has not yet produced men to take rank with Shakespeare, Bacon, and Milton. These are the great Englishmen who, like stars, dwell apart, in unapproachable spheres of their own. But while Scotland can reckon among her sons Sir Walter Scott, Sir William Hamilton, Edward Irving, Thomas Chalmers, John Wilson, and Hugh Miller, she need experience no jealous or envious feeling towards her Southern neighbour. This much can be said in favour of Scotland, that the masses of her people are better educated and more intelligent than the masses of

Englishmen ; and that if she does not rise so high, neither does she sink so low. If it be true that the range of the English mind is great, and that it has struck the highest notes, let it be remembered that the man who is at this moment wielding the greatest influence in British literature is a North Briton. Thomas Carlyle is a Scotchman of the true Titanic mould. England cannot claim Sir Isaac Newton as exclusively her own—his grandfather was a Scotchman. My belief is that these two branches of the Anglo-Saxon stock are the complements one of the other ; that the one is necessary to supply the deficiencies of the other. In all the sterling qualities that have placed the British race so high among the nations, who will undertake to say which is foremost ? In the highest intellectual manifestations, if the English mind be most complete, the Scotch is the more intense and active. It has often been remarked that the Scotch are more abstract in their way of thinking—more inclined to drive down to first principles, and to follow these out to their logical consequences ; the English mind succeeds better in applying principles to the multiform conditions of human existence. Thus Adam Smith, a Scotchman, first enunciated the principles of free-trade ; but it required Sir Robert Peel to apply them. The Scotchman's political and religious creed is more rounded and logical than that of the Englishman ; but on this account

less fitted for general use and acceptance. Hugh Miller reckoned the Scotch less insular than the English—less inclined to be detached and solitary. The Englishman is more individual, self-sufficing, and self-contained. In “The Heart of Midlothian,” Mrs Glass says to the Duke of Argyle, “Your Grace kens we Scotch are clannish bodies.” “So much the better for us,” replies the Duke, “and the worse for those who meddle with us.” Stout, surly Samuel Johnson said, “One grand element in the success of Scotchmen in London is their nationality. Whatever any one Scotchman does, there are five hundred more prepared to applaud.” It was the same observer, whose anti-Scottish prejudices were so strong, who made the rather ill-natured remark, “Most Scotchmen love Scotland better than truth, and almost all of them love it better than inquiry.” Most people, I think, who have travelled or lived in both countries will admit that, in the habits and arrangements of social life, in those thousand nameless amenities that brighten and beautify everyday life, the Scotch are, as a whole, decidedly behind the English. A writer in the *North British Review* (Scottish in its leanings) says, “In Scotland there is a bareness of all beyond what is dictated by absolute utility, that is not pleasant and perhaps not wise; and corresponding to this, there is a singular hardness and angularity of manner. In their anxiety to leave no mistake

about the *fortiter in re*, the *suaviter in modo* is too frequently forgotten." In due time, I doubt not, these little angularities will be rubbed off, in the rapidly-increasing intercourse which railways and business transactions have created between the two countries.

Of the many noble qualities common to both English and Scotch I have little time to speak, but shall merely indicate one or two. Take both together, and are they not appropriately called "the hands of the human race?"—so industriously have they wrought in subduing the earth, and fitting it up as a habitation for man. No great talkers—priding themselves on a certain gruff taciturnity—they are born workers,—indomitable, unresting, courageous. All that these Britons have is the purchase of hard toil—of honest industry. From earth and sea Britain has wrung her immense wealth by centuries of labour. "The English," says Carlyle, "are a dumb people. They can do great acts, but not describe them. Like the old Romans, and some few others, their epic poem is written on the earth's surface: England, her mark. A terrible worker is Bull; irresistible against marshes, mountains, impediments, disorder, incivilisation; everywhere vanquishing disorder, leaving it behind him as method and order. His epic is a mighty empire, slowly built together—a mighty series of heroic

deeds—a mighty conquest over chaos,—which epic the eternal melodies have and must have informed and dwelt in as *it* sung itself. There is no mistaking that latter epic. Deeds are greater than words.” “O Mr Bull,” he says again, “I look in that surly face of thine with a mixture of pity and laughter, yet also with wonder and veneration. Unconsciously this great universe is great to thee. Thou art of those great ones whose greatness the small passer-by does not discern. Thy very stupidity is wiser than their wisdom. Nature alone knows thee—acknowledges the bulk and strength of thee; thy epic, unsung in words, is written in huge characters on the face of this planet—sea-moles, cotton-trades, railways, fleets, and cities, Indian empires, Americas, New Hollands, legible throughout the solar system.” In his “English Traits,” the American Emerson says, “Here exists the best stock in the world,—broad-fronted, broad-bottomed, best for depth, range, and equability—men of aplomb and reserves, great range, and many moods, strong instincts, yet apt for culture. . . . Their habits and instincts cleave to nature. They are full of coarse strength, rude exercise, butchers’ meat, and sound sleep. . . . Half their strength they do not put forth. They are capable of a sublime resolution; and if hereafter the war of races should menace the English civilisation, these

sea-kings may take once again to their floating castles, and find a new home and a second millennium of power in their colonies."

To do the world's work, these Britons require strong bodies, iron thews and sinews; and nature has endowed them with immense bodily vigour and power of endurance. To sustain such a bodily frame under hard work, they must have generous living; and good feeding is one of the points on which the Englishman prides himself the world over, very properly glorying in his roast beef and plum-pudding. A stout worker like John could never subsist on gruel or potatoes. With him dinner is an important matter—one of primary consideration; and woe to the man who ventures to interfere with it! Let him attend to his work, earn his wages, and eat his dinner in peace, and he will never be found engaged in insurrections or revolutions. In a liking for solid and substantial fare the English surpass the Scotch. The realised idea of the one is roast beef and foaming ale; the other rejoices in haggis, broth, and brose. A Scotchman was once dining, with great satisfaction, off a singed sheep's-head, and pronounced it a capital dish. "Dish!" said an Englishman who was present, "do you call that a dish?" "Dish or no," replied Sandy, "there's a deal of fine confused feeding in it, I can tell you."

A foreigner, landing on the shores of Britain, is at

once impressed with the powerful physical development of the people. "Other countrymen," says Emerson, "look slight and under-sized beside them, and invalids. They are bigger men than the Americans. I suppose a hundred English, taken at random out of the street, would weigh a fourth more than so many Americans. Yet I am told the skeleton is not larger. They are round, ruddy, and handsome; at least the whole bust is well-formed, and there is a tendency to stout and powerful frames. I remarked the stoutness on my first landing at Liverpool; porter, drayman, coachman, guard—what substantial, respectable, grandfatherly figures, with costume and manners to suit!" "The fair Saxon man," he adds, "with open front and honest meaning, domestic, affectionate, is not the wood out of which cannibal or inquisitor is made; but he is moulded for law, trade, marriage, the nurture of children, for colleges, churches, charities, colonies." "The English are good at storming redoubts, at boarding frigates, at dying in the last ditch, or any desperate service that has daylight and honour in it." As to the comparative strength of the English and Scotch, Hugh Miller says that it has been determined, by accurate experiment with the dynamometer, that the average strength of the full-grown Scot exceeds that of the full-grown Englishman by about one-twentieth. So much for oatmeal against wheaten bread and beer.

The British people have long been noted for their conservative tendencies, and their dislike of change. For whatever has been established by actual experiment, for law and custom, they have a profound reverence ; for mere abstract theory no respect at all. Hence, unlike the French, they grow, retaining a firm hold of the old till the new is formed ; they dislike revolutions, and plant themselves on reforms. " Bull is a born conservative," says Carlyle ; " and for this too I inexpressibly honour him. All great peoples are conservative ; slow to believe in novelties ; patient of much error in actualities ; deeply and for ever certain of the greatness that is in law, in custom once solemnly established, and now long recognised as just and final." Yet to all this there is a strong counterpoise in that discontent with real or imaginary evils which forms the radical side of the British character, and secures progress by an antagonism of forces. The sacred and inalienable right of grumbling, and of holding public meetings to give expression to discontent with things as they are, is really one of the safeguards of British liberty, and one of the guarantees of improvement. Wanting this, conservatism would become a stupid, blind obstructive. But liberty is secured by this antagonism of powers, and thus the complicated and majestic mechanism of institutions moves on smoothly, securing individual freedom and national peace.

Above all other people, the British are home-loving and domestic in their habits. Amid life's storms, the Briton has a haven where he can cast anchor and be in safety, and that is home. The very word is dear to his heart, and calls up all that is truest and tenderest in his nature—all that is hallowed in affection, and sacred in virtue and religion. The strength of the family ties can scarcely be overrated. In the home, the temple of the family, all that purity, affection, gentleness, truthfulness which beautify the character are awakened and developed; and here, too, the human heart first learns that love which finds its highest repose in God. To the home-life of England I would trace that love of truth which is admitted to be a national characteristic. John Bull is a thorough hater of shams, falsehoods, and deceptions in every form; shuffling and double-dealing he scorns; veracity and sincerity he loves. The Scotch share in this noble trait, as one of their proverbs finely shews: "Leal heart never lee'd,"—a loyal heart scorns a falsehood. One result of this is a love of fair play, a disposition to hear both sides, and a scorn of taking any unfair advantage.

It has often been remarked that the English have no very lively sympathies with foreigners; that they are devoted to England; insular and narrow in their views of the affairs of other countries. This results,

no doubt, from the pre-occupation of the national feeling with their own country and institutions, which is the moral root of English freedom, and imparts strength to their passionate attachment to everything British. A French writer already quoted, M. Esquiros, says, "I have seen peoples very punctilious on the point of national honour—the least critical observation vexed them; but before an Englishman you may indicate the weak signs of British civilisation, and not even irritate him: he is silent, but it is the silence of contempt. In the sight of Englishmen there is no such thing as defeat; it is an error of fortune. When they speak of their victories, they do so without boasting: Dame Fortune had done her duty this time—that was all. From this moral disposition springs an unbounded confidence in the imperishable greatness of the nation, even when you pretend to believe in its decadence. 'England for ever!' is the war-cry, the voice of the British blood."

At the close of a lecture I can do little more than attempt a few remarks on the Americans as a people. I cannot pretend to a right to speak from personal observation regarding the variety of the Anglo-Saxon race now reigning on the American continent. It is true, I once partook, for a few weeks, of Brother Jonathan's hospitality. I stood on Bunker's Hill, and thought of the bloody contest that once raged there, fought out with true Saxon

pluck and mastiff tenacity on both sides. As I looked on the fine harbour of Boston, I remembered the remarkable infusion of tea once made in its waters—a historical “brew,” that proved very costly to honest, obstinate John Bull. Passing through Cambridge on my way to Mount Auburn, I reverently raised my hat opposite the house of Longfellow, the poet-laureate of the West, and fervently wished that the sweet singer had been at the window to return the salutation. Before the houses of Agassiz, the great naturalist and geologist, who has so eloquently expounded some of the “manuscripts of God,” and of Russell Lowell, who as a poet ranks next to Longfellow, I performed a similar act of silent reverence, and thought it was something to see even the outside of the habitations that sheltered these world-renowned men. Mount Auburn, the cemetery of Boston, I thought the sweetest of “God’s-acres” in which the weary could wish to rest. I stood awe-stricken before the thunders of Niagara—a sight which forms an epoch in one’s existence, and stamps itself on memory’s tablets too deeply ever to be effaced. During a long summer’s day, I sailed down the St Lawrence, revelling in the glorious scenery of “The Thousand Islands,” shooting the rapids, and gazing on the forests and hills that line the shores of the mighty river. I formed a passing acquaintance with New York and some

others of the great cities of the West, and experimented cautiously in those two wonderful drinks that can be had only in America,—mint-julep and sherry-cobbler,—which I am bound to say are “not that bad,” and do credit to the inventive genius of Jonathan. But my sojourn was too brief to qualify me for forming an opinion of the people or the country. Still, I suppose, in what I have got to say, some general impressions of both, derived from this hasty visit, will discover themselves.

It would ill become any Briton to speak disparagingly or unkindly of the Americans. They are our own kindred—“bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.” They have exhibited many of the noblest qualities of the Anglo-Saxon stock—vast energy, indomitable resolution, patience, and endurance. They have wrestled in grim earnest with the Western wilderness, clearing successfully wide fields, in which the human race may erect new empires, and find sustenance and a home. The amount of genuine work done by them since the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock is incalculable. With true Saxon vigour they have grappled with difficulties and triumphed over innumerable obstacles; they fought bravely for their independence, and won it; they framed a political constitution, under which they have become a great and prosperous nation, and secured liberty at home and re-

spect abroad. It is needless to speak of their wealth, their world-wide commerce, their literature, their general intelligence. In some portions of New England the masses of the people are more generally educated, up to a certain point, than anywhere else in the world. They have produced literary men—such as Bancroft, Prescott, Washington Irving, Motley, Emerson, Audubon, Agassiz, (Swiss by birth,) Longfellow, Lowell, Bryant, Hawthorne, Holmes, Mrs Stowe—whose place is in the front rank. I regard the eminence in literature attained by the Americans as their most creditable achievement, and that which gives most hope for their future. The general diffusion of education among the people of the Northern States is also a most hopeful sign. With genuine Anglo-Saxon industry, they are farming the best portion of the Western continent, and helping largely to feed the world. Honour to the brave workers, wherever they are! I, for one, believe, too, that the heart of the nation is sound—true Anglo-Saxon still—at bottom full of love and reverence for fatherland. No doubt Jonathan is often found squaring at his venerable parent; and numbers of his noisy politicians are continually sputtering with ill-will to England. But much of this is the result of not being certain of his position, and a determination to assert his independence. Before we get angry with some of the more disgusting exhibitions of anti-British feelings, let us

remember how much of the blackguardism and scum of Europe is continually emptied on the shores of America ; and how difficult it must be for the sound Anglo-Saxon element to absorb and transmute the whole into healthy humanity. In their public men, too, as a general rule, we see the worst side of the Americans. Owing to the working of democratic institutions, and the necessity that exists for all public men to pander to the passions of a mob that wields universal suffrage, it is unhappily true that men of intelligence, refinement, culture, and honourable character are driven from the guidance of public affairs, which are now largely in the hands of coarse, unscrupulous demagogues. It is an alarming thing when the best men of a country—the men whose high intellect and moral principles qualify them to be rulers—stand aloof and let the foolish, the corrupt, and selfish guide the vessel of the State. The best well-wishers of America know and lament that such has been for a long time the state of matters there. This is an evil, however, that in due time will cure itself. That America contains an immense number of educated, generous, noble, true-hearted people, no one can doubt ; and these will, sooner or later, be compelled to bestir themselves, and arrest the knaves and fools that are now so rampant, otherwise the body politic cannot continue to exist. With pure democracy as a form of government, I confess that,

so far as my light goes, I have few sympathies. The events that have occurred in America during the three years of civil war confirm Macaulay's verdict, that "institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty or civilisation, or both." Democracy, such as we see it, may fairly be defined, in Carlyle's phrase, "anarchy plus the street constable." The great danger of all democracies is that of degenerating into a despotism of the mob—the government of the worst—the vilest of all possible governments. The ballot-box rarely, if ever, places the really able man—the true king of men—the born ruler, upon the throne. Its creation is usually something the reverse of kingly. Whatever other method may avail for discovering the able man, it is clear the ballot-box fails. For my part, I believe that the peculiarities of Americans, that offend or repel the English mind, spring from their institutions, far more than from the native character of the people; but I trust and hope that the soundness and energy of the Anglo-Saxon constitution will ultimately throw off all morbid influences. It is clear that the troubles of America have now fairly set in. A nation hitherto enjoying unbroken prosperity, possessed of boundless resources, now knows that perpetual peace and success are not for mortals or nations; and that, in common with others, it must pass through the sore agony and the mortal struggle before victory shall arrive. More

than a dozen years since, Carlyle, in his "Latter-Day Pamphlets," wrote—"America, too, will have to strain its energies in quite other fashion than this; to crack its sinews, and all but break its heart, as the rest of us have had to do, in thousandfold wrestle with the pythons and mud-demons, before it can become a habitation for the gods. America's battle is yet to fight; and we sorrowful, though nothing doubting, will wish her strength for it. New spiritual pythons, plenty of them; enormous megatherions, as ugly as were ever born of mud, loom, huge and hideous, out of the twilight future on America." "Hitherto she but ploughs and hammers in a very successful manner; hitherto, in spite of her 'roast goose with apple sauce,' she is not much. Brag not to me of our American cousins! Their quantity of cotton, dollars, industry, and resources, I believe to be almost unspeakable; but I can by no means worship the like of these. What great human soul, what great thought, what great noble thing that one could worship, or loyally admire, has yet been produced there? None; the American cousins have yet done none of these things." The agony, predicted in this remarkable passage, commenced with the first shot fired against Fort Sumter. Whatever way the civil war may end, it is evident that a new order of things, social and political, will arise for Jonathan. May it be happier and better than the past!

Wishing, then, our American relatives happily through their troubles, we may turn and consider for a moment what sort of development the Anglo-Saxon race assumes on this side the Atlantic. Russell Lowell, the well-known American poet, thus characterises the Yankees—that is, the people of the New England States :—“Add two hundred years’ influence of soil, climate, and exposure, with its necessary result of idiosyncracies, and we have the present Yankee,—full of expedients ; half-master of all trades ; inventive in all but the beautiful ; full of shifts ; not yet capable of comfort ; armed at all points against the old enemy, hunger ; longanimous ; good at patching ; not so careful for what is best, but for what will *do* ; with a clasp to his purse and a button to his pocket ; not skilled to build against time, as in old countries, but against sore-pressing need ; accustomed to move the world with no other lever than his own long forecast. A strange hybrid, indeed, did circumstances beget here in the New World upon the old Puritan stock ; and the earth never before saw such mystic practicalism, such niggard geniality, such calculating fanaticism, such cast-iron enthusiasm, such sour-faced humour, such close-fisted generosity. This new *Græculus esuriens* will make a living out of anything. He will invent new trades, as well as tools. His brain is his capital, and he will get education at all risks. Put him on Juan Fernandez, and he will

make a spelling-book first, and a salt-pan afterwards." After this half-humorous but accurate fashion does Lowell depict his Yankee compatriots.

Every one knows that the physical development and external appearance of the American differ from those of the Englishman. Jonathan is thin, tall, angular, bony, clipper-built, sharp at the bows, and fast to go. He has not the rotundity and muscular development of Bull; he is an Englishman "rendered down"—divested of his fat under the fierce summer suns and piercing colds of the New World. In consequence, he is far more nervous and quick in his movements than the solid Bull. He cannot be a moment at rest; when seated, he must have a stick to whittle. He has not the compact frame and robust health of his parent. Hitherto, in the American climate, the Anglo-Saxon stock has clearly degenerated, in a physical point of view. Their lank, juiceless bodies, pale, care-worn faces, thin, bloodless lips, and tendency to quick development and early decay, are all proofs how much the good old Saxon stock has fallen off. They are nervous, not muscular Christians. Human life is shorter than in the Old World. Men and women live faster. Their offspring are reared with difficulty; large families are rare; the mortality among children is startling. These remarks apply to native-born Americans, not fresh arrivals from the old country. Worst of all, the Americans themselves pro-

claim that their women are, as a general rule, feeble and unhealthy. I could quote to you page after page of American writers, in which they lament the physical degeneracy of the race, and especially mourn over the increasing delicacy of their women. One of their leading medical writers says, "Our dear women of America are the most unhealthy women in the world." Miss Beecher declares that, in all sections of the country, a vigorous and perfectly healthy woman is an exception to the general experience—that not three out of ten can be classed as healthy women. This state of matters must tell fearfully on the physical, and, through it, on the moral condition of coming generations. Dr Knox, in his "Races of Men," has announced the doctrine that the Anglo-Saxon race flourishes only within a certain area of the earth's surface, and that it degenerates so rapidly in America that if it were not for the fresh blood poured in continually from Europe the race would speedily become extinct. Be this as it may, the unnatural craving for excitement among the Americans, the violence of their political contests, their brag and exaggeration of themselves and their institutions—so unlike silent, self-disparaging John Bull—their indisposition to manly sports and out-door amusements, all indicate that the old stock has undergone a marked change on this side the Atlantic, and certainly not for the better. The intermixture of races, too, which is

taking place on a large scale, is, we have seen, opposed to the production of a robust, permanent variety of the species. Thus, whether we regard the climate or other influences, the greatest danger that seems to menace the race arises from the operation of a grim, inexorable physiological law. No doubt it is possible that, in the course of generations, the climate may be mitigated, as the country is cultivated and drained, and that improved habits and acclimatisation may counteract the present degeneracy; but at present these are distant and doubtful possibilities. Already, alarmed at the thinning of their blood, and the skeletonising process that is going on, one extreme party in the Northern States are calling out for a fusion of the white and negro races, as a means of enriching the impoverished frames of the superior race. This notable scheme is called *miscegenation*; and its advocates gravely argue in favour of sinking the Anglo-Saxon in the negro, and transmuting him into a creole. The theory is too absurd for discussion.

It is well known that one result of the working of democratic institutions in America has been the creation of an *institution* named, rather happily, "stump-oratory." The necessity of continually appealing to the passions of the mob, in ceaseless electioneering campaigns, has produced the stump-orator, of whose trade the staple is "*buncombe*." I fear the moral effects of this institution are not favourable. I suspect that

the stump-orator generates a belief in shams as the best means of attaining an object, and a depraved taste for bluster and brag, and "the spread-eagle" style of talking and writing. The stump-orator has much to answer for. It would be an improvement if, in Yankee phrase, he were compelled to "absquatulate," or "skedaddle." Their own poet Lowell has satirised very happily, in the amusing *Biglow Papers*, the tendency to which I refer. He makes one of his characters say,—

" I du believe in prayer and praise
 To him that hez the grantin'
 O' jobs,—in everything that pays;
 And most of all in cantin'.
 This doth my cup with marcies fill,
 This lays all thought of sin to rest;
 I don't believe in principle,
 But I du believe in interest.

" In short, I firmly du believe
 In Humbug generally;
 For it's a thing that I perceive
 To hev a solid vally.
 This heth my faithful shepherd been,
 In pastures sweet heth led me;
 An' this 'll keep the people green
 To feed as they hev fed me."

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" Parson Wilbur he calls all these arguments lies;
 Sez they're nothing on earth but just fee, fa, fum;
 And that all this big talk of our destinies
 Is half on it ignorance, and t'other half rum.
 But John P.
 Robinson he
 Sez it ain't no sech thing; and of cource so must we.

"Parson Wilbur sez he never heerd in his life
 Thet the apostles rigg'd out in their swaller-tail'd coats,
 An' march'd round in front of a drum and a fife,
 To git some on 'em office, and some on 'em votes;
 But John P.
 Robinson he
 Sez they don't know everything down in Judee."

In America the English language has undergone a considerable alteration. New words have been coined—a sign of life at all events—and a peculiar dialect has been created. As illustrations of this, I can only refer to a few instances. The word "sir" becomes "siree," to which the elegant addition of "bob" is sometimes made. "You appear to me to be drunk," said a judge on one occasion, addressing a juror, who was evidently much "influenced." The juror straightened himself up defiantly, and replied, "No, siree, bob." "Very well," said the judge, "I fine you five dollars for the 'ree,' and ten for the 'bob.'" Where we would request a person to be off quickly, a Yankee would order him to "make tracks," or to run "short metre,"—the latter phrase being derived from psalm or hymn tunes. Anything very shabby or mean of its kind is said to be "one-horse." They talk about a "one-horse bank," or a "one-horse lawyer." Ladies who get into what we call the "tantrums" are said in America to get into "conniption fits." The word "fixins" has a great variety of applications. Gentlemen dress in their

Sunday "fixins," and eat their mutton with "currant-jelly fixins;" and ladies who dress showily are said to have "loud fixins." Terms derived from the shop and counting-house are common. A person well-informed on a subject is said to be "posted up;" another who is troublesome with his talk is requested to "shut up;" and the remainder is "the balance." General M'Clellan, in returning thanks for the presentation of a sword, said "he hoped to spend the balance of his days in peace among them when the war was concluded." The word "sat" is usually pronounced "sot." They speak of a piece being "sot to music," or of being "sharp sot." A young lady at a ball having been long without a partner, was at length asked to dance. "Yes, siree," she replied with animation; "for I've sot, and sot, and sot till I've about tuck root."

The American dialect varies with the locality. Certain modes of speech are peculiar to the New Englanders; others are heard only among the Western men, who "eat wild turkey, and drink of the Mississippi." The South and the South-west have their peculiar phrases. A Western man says of a story that it "smells rather tall." "Stranger," he says, "in bar-hunts I am numerous." Of a pathetic story he says that "it sank into his feelins like a snagged boat into the Mississippi." He tells of a person "as cross as a bar with two cubs and a sore tail." A Southern

man is "powerful lazy, and powerful slow;" but if you visit him, he'll go for you "to the hilt against creation, that's tatur." When people salute each other on meeting, he says they are "howdyin' and civilisin' each other." A man who has undressed has "shucked himself." The extreme of facility is not as easy as lying, but "as easy as shootin'." Yankees guess everything—past, present, and future. They are dreadful glad to see you, and powerful sorry you enjoy such bad health. It is the Southerners who "reckon and calkellate." The Yankee statement of the positive, comparative, and superlative duties of life is, "first, we get on; then we get honour; and then we get honest."* A late American writer, Dr Nichols, says, "In no country are the faces of the people furrowed with harder lines of care. In no country is there so much hard, toilsome, unremitting labour; in none so little recreation and enjoyment of life. Work and worry eat out the hearts of the people, and they die before their time. Why the universal and everlasting struggle for wealth here? Because it is the one thing needful—the only real distinction. Nowhere is money sought so eagerly,—nowhere does it bring so little to its possessor. It is an end—not a means."

These are the words of a keen observer, an American by birth. They go to prove, at least,

* Dr Nichols' "Forty Years of American Life."

that America is not yet an earthly paradise. All travellers complain of the extravagant homage rendered to the ladies in America—not that chivalrous deference which is accorded to woman in all civilised communities, but such treatment as is given to spoiled children. To such an extent is this foolish social usage carried, that it amounts to a tyranny, against which sensible Americans are ever threatening to rebel, and to commence an agitation on behalf of “men’s rights,” in opposition to female claims. Its effect on the ladies is the reverse of commendable, rendering them thanklessly exacting, unamiably tyrannical over the “weaker vessels,” languid, and often incapable of self-help. Such a delicate and impartial observer as Miss Bremer, in her “Homes of the New World,” says, in reference to the modes of life of American ladies,—“No, it is not good; it has not the freshness of nature, that life which so many ladies lead in this country; that life of twilight in comfortable rooms, rocking themselves by the fireside from one year’s end to another; that life of effeminate warmth and inactivity, by which they seclude themselves from the fresh air, from fresh, invigorating life. And the physical weakness of the ladies of this country must in great measure be ascribed to their effeminate education. It is a sort of harem life, although with this difference, that they, unlike the Oriental women, are here in this Western

country regarded as sultanesses, and the men as their subjects." The offensive habit of boasting of themselves and their institutions has laid Americans open to the animadversion of European travellers. They not only feel themselves able to "whip creation," but they must be perpetually bragging of this ability. Warburton, in his "*Hochelaga*," says, "The want of pride in Americans is made up for by the most astounding conceit; they perpetually declare to each other their wisdom, virtue—in short, perfection; and will not allow even a share of this merit to other nations." John Bull is too proud to be vain.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the day may be very distant when America and England shall again meet in the deadly shock of battle. A war between these two great nations would be a calamity to the whole civilised world. Mr Anthony Trollope, who has recently been among the Americans, gives it as his opinion that there is danger of such a collision, owing partly to the increased soreness and bitterness on the part of the Americans towards England, since the civil war broke out, and partly to the probability of a military despotism springing up, when the contest is ended. This writer remarks, that though such a war would be highly injurious to England, it would be doubly disastrous to America. Of one thing I feel certain,—that Britain will only take up arms against America when driven to do so

by dire necessity. And if that stern necessity should arise, it will be seen that Old England has lost none of her ancient valour, and that her sailors and soldiers have not degenerated since the days of Trafalgar and Waterloo.

- “ There she sits in her island-home,
Peerless among her peers !
And humanity oft to her arms doth come,
To ease its poor heart of tears.
Old England still throbs with the muffled fire
Of a past she can never forget ;
And again shall she banner the world up higher,
For there's life in the old land yet.
- “ They would mock at her now who of old look'd forth
In their fear as they heard her afar ;
But loud will your wail be, O kings of the earth !
When the old land goes down to the war.
The avalanche trembles, half-launch'd and half-riven,
Her voice will in motion set ;
Oh, ring out the tidings, ye winds of heaven !
There's life in the old land yet.
- “ The old nursing mother's not hoary yet,
There is sap in her Saxon tree ;
Lo ! she lifteth a bosom of glory yet,
Through her mists, to the sun and the sea.
Fair as the Queen of Love fresh from the foam,
Or a star in a dark cloud set ;
Ye may blazon her shame—ye may leap at her name—
But there's life in the old land yet.
- “ Let the storm burst, it will find the old land
Ready ripe for a rough red fray !
She will fight as she fought when she took her stand
For the right in the olden day.
Ay, rouse the old royal soul, Europe's best hope
Is her sword edge by victory set !
She shall dash freedom's foes adown death's bloody slope ;
For there's life in the old land yet.”

LECTURE THE FIFTH.

THE POETRY OF GEOLOGY.

MY object in this address is not to attempt an exposition of the principles of geology. A real acquaintance with this science can only be attained by a long and patient study of those great writers who are its recognised expounders, and cannot be hoped for by the cheap and easy method of listening to a few popular lectures. All that the lecturer can hope to accomplish is to indicate some of the grand features of this fascinating science, to make known some of its sublime discoveries, and to shew the practical application of its principles; and thus to awaken a desire in the minds of his auditors for further information. The lecture is not the proper medium for imparting minute instruction in geology, or any other science. The object I have in view in this brief address is very simple and very humble. It is to

take some of the established truths of geology—some of those startling discoveries about which there can now be no question—and to endeavour to place these before you, not in the clear, cold light of science, but rather in that of imagination. In other words, I shall endeavour to deal, not with the *science*, but the *poetry* of geology—that is, with those features of it which appeal to the imagination.

At first sight, it might seem almost hopeless to look for anything of a poetical type in the stony science, dealing as it does with rocks and earth-beds, and going down, as a great resurrectionist, into nature's awful charnel-house, and dragging thence, with pick-axe and hammer, the long-buried remains of extinct generations. One might fancy that the study of this science must be a sort of "meditation among the tombs"—very dismal and repulsive—and that geologists must be about as fascinating characters as grave-diggers. In reality, however, this rugged science is rich in poetic elements, and furnishes stores of the noblest food for the imagination. From the strong comes forth sweetness. In the coming ages, I doubt not, poets will find, in the magnificent disclosures of geology, some of their finest inspirations; and will eagerly occupy the vast fields it has laid open to imagination's soaring wing. We all admit the sublimity and poetry of astronomy—the "star-eyed science"—that has thrown out its plumb-line, and

sounded the mighty depths of space—that has tracked the comet in its fiery career, weighed the suns and planets, measured their distances, and extracted the secret of their movements, and even gauged those nebulous masses that hang, as light clouds, on the outskirts of our sidereal system. But not less sublime is geology in its aims and achievements. It has deciphered much of that wondrous world-story—stranger far than all that fiction has invented—which is written by an almighty hand in the solid rocks—“the manuscripts of God” inscribed on tables of stone. It has read off those mysterious hieroglyphics in which the history of our planet was written, during the long ages that preceded man’s entrance on the scene. It has recorded the convulsions and changes through which earth has passed, and told how its huge granite ribs were molten and cast in the primeval fires,—how its rocky sides were formed, and then torn and hurled to the surface, amid convulsive throes,—how its mountain-chains were raised aloft, its sea-beds and river-courses scooped out, and its continents built up. From the primeval granite, hardening over the internal sea of fire, up to the deposition of the vegetable soil in which the “modest crimson-tipp’d” daisy takes root,—through all the growth and decay of world after world, and the rise and fall of empires and dynasties on which no human eye ever gazed,—tracing out their mighty ruins

with the clear eye of reason,—geology aims at nothing less than constructing a biography of our globe. Stranger still, the geologist can trace the march of life over this stage of being. He can tell of what wondrous races, long since passed away, it was the birth-place. He disinters their stony skeletons, and reconstructs their forms, and, to the eye of fancy, makes them live and breathe again. For myriads of years they had lain in their stony shrouds: under the waving of the geologist's wand, they visit once more "the glimpses of the moon;" and we are lost in wonder at the uncouth, gigantic forms that were once lords of creation—monarchs of all they surveyed.

Is there no poetry in all this—nothing to stir the imagination? Is there no beauty in that mighty plan, reaching "from everlasting to everlasting," by which the Great Architect has been working for countless ages, to awaken our wonder and worship? Is there no melody to charm the ear of fancy in those wonderful "rhymes of the universe" written on stony tablets? Nay, I think, here is the sublimest poetry—the poetry of truth, not of fiction. Let a geologist tell you the tale of some granite peak that lifts its "bald, awful" head amid the clouds,—how it sprang of old from the fiery gulf—how once the sea-weeds were wrapped around its shoulders, and the sea-shells decked its summits as the waves played among its crests—how from the bottom of the sea slowly up-

heaved, through long ages, it rose to be a "heaven-hissing" mountain ; or let him sit down by some gray, moss-covered boulder or wave-worn pebble, and narrate through what strange wanderings and vicissitudes they have passed, and you will listen to a tale more fascinating by far than "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," more wonderful than all that even Milton's imagination bodied forth. In all things, however poor or commonplace, there is poetry, if we have but the eyes to see it. Then what poetry lies embalmed in that gorgeous science that has the whole past eternity for its empire, that carries the imagination back into the abysses of time, and "the long-faded glories they cover," and restores the creations that bloomed and fell myriads of ages before man stepped on the scene ! What are the ruins of Nineveh, Egypt, Persepolis, or Rome compared with the ruins of ancient worlds, and "the storied urns" of those mighty dynasties that preceded man on earth ! If the hoary ruin, only a few centuries old, commands our veneration ; if we tread reverently over the buried dust of former generations of men, shall we not feel our awe and wonder stirred as we gaze on relics whose date no human mind can fix, and compared with which the oldest transactions of human history are but as yesterday ? And if we are lost in wonder over the excavated slabs that once lined the walls of Nineveh's proud palaces ; if we pore

over the hieroglyphics that tell the tale of Egypt's early history, should we not, with still deeper rapture, study the structure of our world, with its inscribed characters, and learn through what revolutions it has reached its present condition? Shakespeare said, long ago, that there were "sermons in stones;" and geology may be regarded as a great homily from a stony text, or as a great prose-poem with the globe as its subject, or as a grand Oratorio of Creation :—

" Through the circles, high and holy,
Of an everlasting change,
Now more swiftly, now more slowly,
Form must pass and function range.
Nothing in the world can perish,
Death is life and life is death ;
All we love and all we cherish
Dies to breathe a nobler breath.

" From the dark and troubled surges
Of the roaring sea of time
Evermore a world emerges,
Solemn, beautiful, sublime.
So of old, from Grecian water,
'Mid the music and the balm,
Rose the dread Olympian's daughter,
Floating on the azure calm."

There is, then, such a thing as the poetry of geology. Even in the commonest things there is beauty, if we have the seeing eye; and it is the peculiar function of the poet to discover the beautiful, wherever it exists, and to worship at its shrine. Where to the common eye there is only a grim rock

or a dark earth-bed, a geologist with a poetic eye, like Hugh Miller, sees a world of beauty, and connects the shattered fragment or the dingy stratum with the wondrous story of the globe. To him the fossil and the rock are flashing with poetry. They are full of beauty, and call up wondrous associations and strange, rich memories. These are the characters in which are written the chapters of that great world-story whose leaves are the solid rock.

One of the most startling disclosures of geology has reference to the original condition of our globe. We look abroad now over the surface of the earth, and see mountain ranges, hills and plains, rivers hurrying on towards the ocean, a bright, green carpet covering the soil. The rain and snow descend; the seasons succeed one another with undeviating regularity; and we are apt to think that the order of nature has been the same from the beginning. Six thousand years ago we fancy the earth sprang into existence, complete from the Creator's hand; and man, as lord of creation, we suppose then took his place at the head of the animated series. This is the short and easy method of creation; but it is far from being the real one. Very different indeed is the tale which geology unfolds. It demonstrates, from an examination of the rocks that compose the crust of the earth, that the globe has slowly and gradually reached its present condition; that the great creative and destruc-

tive processes, we now see going on around us, were in operation for myriads of ages before man's day on earth; that races of animals, totally different from those which now walk the surface of the planet, lived, died, and were wrapped in their stony winding-sheets, during periods of the past eternity so vast as to defy the powers of imagination, and in comparison with which six thousand years are as a drop taken from the mighty ocean. During these pre-Adamite ages, whose long, deep swells are marked on the shores of time by the wrecks they have cast up, the earth passed through vast changes: its rocks, thousands of feet in thickness, were gradually accumulated, its strata slowly deposited, and its solid framework built up through myriads of ages, till it became fitted to be a dwelling-place for man. Geology does not pretend to determine what was the original condition of that matter out of which our globe was thus formed. The beginning and the end are to us alike impenetrably dark. Laplace and Herschel have conjectured that originally the assemblage of bodies, that at present form our solar system, were one celestial mass, and consisted of matter in its most attenuated state, floating through space, like one of those mysterious patches of light clouds, called *nebulæ*, that we see swimming in the celestial spaces. This gaseous mass, they suppose, under the influence of gravitation, of cohesive force, and chemical attraction, became moulded into

a sphere ; and then, under the influence of the laws impressed on it by the Creator, threw off from its surface, masses which became separate spheres, whirling round the central mass ; and thus we have the sun and the planets revolving round it as the central point of attraction. If this theory be correct, then the matter of each world was once a sort of fire-mist, and was afterwards collected into a vast fire-cloud, which in due time was condensed into planet-masses ; and from chaos well-ordered worlds arose. This grand theory—which, whether true or false, could only have originated in a mind of vast capacity—has been thus expressed in the language of poetry :—

“ But in vain you would aspire,
Looking left and looking right,
O'er that mist of golden fire
To direct your aching sight.
Silent is it, burning, breathing,
Like a sea of crimson cloud,
Waves on waves are wreath'd and wreathing,
A self-convoluted cloud.—
See it whirling, calm and steady !
See it surging to and fro !
As the waters gleam and eddy,
In some whirlpool chafed to snow.
Cooler, cooler is it glowing,
Denser here and denser there ;
Slowly, slowly orbs are growing
Out of this gross, fiery air.
One has, with a sudden motion,
Left the old, parental fire ;
Yet around this radiant ocean
Is it drawn with strange desire.

Others now, with others, sever—
The great mist itself is one !
You may see them rolling ever,
The bright children of the sun.”

Whatever may be thought of this hypothesis,—usually called “the nebular,”—geology furnishes indisputable evidence that when chaos was passing into cosmos,—when our world was leaving the rudimentary condition and taking definite shape, the materials composing its surface were at such a temperature as to be a molten mass, like glass in a furnace. So totally different was its condition at this period from that which it has now assumed, that it requires an effort to believe that the primeval globe and the present are the same. To form some faint idea of its primeval state, we must conceive of the earth as one mass of boiling lava,—the whole planet one vast volcano, hurling aloft molten torrents, amid frightful thunder and terrific explosions. As yet the molten lava, surrounded by watery vapour, air, and carbonic acid gas, was the sole material existence. Out of these primitive elements our beautiful, flower-clad world was at length to be evolved, with all its living occupants. Gradually the lava cooled at the surface, and became solid rock. The grim reign of chaos may now be said to have ended—cosmos commenced—the almighty creative fiat had gone forth—the world began. The liquid

lava had hardened into granite, and formed the mighty ribs of the globe. The central fire, however, was not extinguished, but shut in by the granite ribs, underneath which it continues to flame on still, finding vent now only through the volcanoes scattered over the globe. Thus, on the surface of this earth-ball, we are whirled through space, while underneath our feet, at the distance only of a few miles, a raging furnace is flaming—heaving its waves of fire fiercely against its granite barriers, at times making the earth tremble with the earthquake's shock, and still flinging up its molten masses through the throat of the volcano. While the liquid granite was undergoing the cooling process, the expansive force of the internal heat, acting from beneath, threw it into a variety of shapes, so that it congealed in waves or jets, which now form many of our hills and mountains. Very wonderful it is to think that such vast chains of mountains as the Andes, the Pyrenees, and the Grampians are just solidified bubbles of the primitive granite, originally hurled up from the seething caldron and congealed into their present form. It is owing to this that nearly all granitic hills and mountains have peaked summits and steep sides. In many cases, however, the granite barely shews itself above the surface of the earth, as in Aberdeenshire, Devonshire, and Galway ; in which places it furnishes the most durable of

all building materials. In this island* the granitic rocks abound, and rear their heads above the surface in many localities. In the peninsula of Avalon, on which St John's stands, there is a range of hills twenty miles in length, running from the back of Renew's to Holyrood in Conception Bay; while, from the latter place, another range runs along the southern shore of Conception Bay, forming the White Hills and the lofty iron-bound coast from Topsail Head to Cape St Francis. At the Renew's and Holyrood extremities of the former ridge stand two hills, each about a thousand feet above the level of the sea, called the Butter-Pots. They are formed of these igneous rocks, of which I have been speaking, that were originally molten in the furnace beneath; the one being principally porphyry, the other capped by a mass of dark gray trap-rock. That bold cliff named Topsail Head, which most of you have seen, is chiefly a mass of pure white quartz-rock. Cape St Francis, again, is principally gray quartz-rock and greenstone. All round the head of Conception Bay the igneous rocks prevail. In Trinity Gut, a sloping sheet of the primitive granite is exposed to view; and the Fair Islands, the islands around Greenspond, and the mainland around Cape Freels, are all formed of the same rocks. When that daring traveller, Cormac,

* Newfoundland.

penetrated the unknown interior of Newfoundland, into which the white man had never ventured before, he tells us that he passed over a long ridge of low granite hills, and that he often ascended the insulated peaks to view the grand undulating forest all around, whose beauty he describes as exquisite. Until he reached Jameson's Lake, in the very centre of the island, he encountered no other kind of rock than the granite. It was when he reached the summit of this great granite range, which he estimated at from twenty to forty miles in width, that the mysterious interior of Newfoundland (to this day a *terra incognita*) broke upon his view. On the one hand lay a dense forest, spotted with bright yellow marshes and gleaming lakes; on the other, stretching away to the westward, were broad savannas, marbled with woods, bright green plains, far as the eye could reach,—a scene of striking beauty, and teeming with life. Can we doubt that one day the tide of population will invade these solitudes, and that these lonely plains, as yet explored by but a single traveller, will become the happy homes of men; and that the soft, sweet voices of children at their sports will yet re-echo through these woods, where now the deer, the fox, and the wolf reign undisturbed? Not always will the energetic inhabitants of this island be content to occupy its shores, gathering the treasures of its surrounding seas. The geological survey which is about

to be initiated, under the direction of Sir William Logan, will lay open the interior, of which at present we know far less than of the interior of Africa ; and when once its agricultural and mineral resources are made known, we may hope that a new era of prosperity will begin. Even the slight researches of a few individuals have already proved that its primitive rocks are rich in minerals ; and lead and copper ore, of the most valuable character, are now rewarding the efforts of the miner, in several localities. When the rich alluvial plains of the western portion of the island are explored, the axe of the backwoodsman will speedily be ringing in the dark forest.

Let us now suppose the granite foundations laid, and the earth so far cooled as to allow the molten surface to become solid ; fancy what an extraordinary appearance our world must have presented ! In all probability, the whole surface was covered with bold and rugged ranges of granite mountains, with deep and fearful valleys intervening between them. Volcanoes were numerous and active, still throwing up the molten mass, to be solidified on the surface. Though the fierce spirits of fire were banished far down to the dark caverns of the globe, to rage and roar in angry passion below, the earth was still in sore travail in those early days, her heaving bosom belching forth torrents of fire, a thousand volcanoes pouring out blazing streams of

lava, amid a trembling and thundering that shook the firmament. Thus the solid land first rose out of the abyss, to greet the light that God had created. Seas would be formed in the valleys between the granite peaks ; and as the moisture of the atmosphere condensed, vast torrents rushed down the sides of the mountains, and during long ages, aided by the action of the atmosphere, washed down the granite hills to the bottoms of seas, where their disintegrated particles were consolidated under vast pressure, and, being crystallised by heat, formed the next series of rocks, called, in geologic phrase, the metaphoric or transition series, or sometimes the gneiss formation. Thus the primitive granitic mountains were slowly worn down, by the same agencies that are still at work levelling the mountains, and were deposited in the waters of the ocean. The ranges that still lift their gray heads aloft are the remains of this primitive race of giants, whose ponderous strength has been able hitherto to resist the attacks of their foes. Down to the bottoms of seas were the granite particles rolled, not by sudden convulsions or rending earthquakes, but by gentle agencies. The water and air drilled and bored countless little holes and channels through the vast body ; the mild rain stole into every cleft and crevice, and oozed from vein to vein, filling the heart of the granite giant with delicate and wondrously ramified little canals. The

cold of winter froze these secret ducts; the veins swelled, loosening the vast fragments with irresistible force, and shattering even the solid granite. Meantime the oxygen was gnawing at every corner and edge, grinding up the minute particles; and the thundering torrent at length comes and sweeps away in wild triumph the rifted fragment, or the glacier takes it up in its icy embrace, bears it down the sloping valley to the sea, and the iceberg floats it far away, and drops it in the dark depths of ocean. Thus, in the wondrous circulation of matter, the granite mountain is spread over the floor of ocean. Now geologists have ascertained that it was at the bottom of this ancient ocean that the creation of life first took place. Two varieties of a humble polypus, the *oldhamia*, have been found; and to the eyes of the geologist this little creature is most venerable, as being the first denizen, as far as science has yet made out, of the oceanic chaos of this period. During many thousands of years, the ground-up granite was deposited in sedimentary strata by the waters of the ocean, that held them in solution. Meantime the expansive force of the internal heat was slowly raising the bottoms of these seas, until at length they became dry land, and constituted the great Cambrian and Silurian formations, many thousand yards in thickness, and requiring enormous periods for their deposition. On the border of

Wales, not far from Shrewsbury, there is a mountain called Longmynd, which, with other mountain groups in the same region, constitutes the basis of the Silurian system. These rugged rocks were the first that rose above the surface of the waters when the foundations of what was to become Britain were laid. Against this breakwater the waves dashed, as for the first time they met with any resistance. Here was the beginning of that sea-girt isle the name of which is familiar now in every land. In these Welsh mountains the geologist reads off the annals of this early world, and pores over the mysteries of the primitive creations. The granite world had departed ; its successor, formed out of its ruins, was emerging from the depths of ocean.

It was a great step in advance when the dry land rose above the waves. Then a higher life than that which could exist at the bottoms of oceans began ; and a more varied climate followed. Geology demonstrates that at first only a few islands rose above the surface of the waters. Where there are now continents, at the date we speak of there were only scattered groups of islands. The outline of England and Scotland was marked by a chain of small islands along what is now the western coast. France was an island—most of Germany an archipelago. The valley of the Mississippi formed a small continent by itself. Between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia there

was a Mediterranean Sea, bordered on all sides by land, which has disappeared beneath the waves. Most of what now constitutes the western counties of Scotland, with Cumberland, Westmoreland, nearly the whole of Wales, and the east of Ireland, formed the bed of a vast sea. A new era dawned—that of the old red sandstone. This formation was built out of the crumbled debris of the Silurian world, deposited at the bottom of the ocean, and coloured by an infusion of oxide of iron. Gradually these beds rose from the depths, towered into mountain ranges, had their river-systems, continents, and vegetable and animal creations. The remains of the old red sandstone world still shew themselves in the loftiest mountains of South Wales, Cornwall, and Devonshire ; but, above all, in Northern Scotland they are piled in imposing magnificence. Here the old red sandstone forms a huge mantle, that is wrapped around the shoulders of the Grampians—the gray giants of the granite age. In it are embedded the remains of numerous marine plants, and also of land cryptogamic ones. It was, however, emphatically the age of fish. Hugh Miller has made a special study of this great field, and has described, in his own eloquent words, the strange fantastic creatures that disported themselves in the primeval Caledonian seas,—balls bristling with thorns, living boats with oars and rudder, the pterichtys, that aspired to enter the bird

family, and "the cephalaspis, with its long tail fastened to a crescent-shaped head covered with a heavy shield." The earliest of the great reptile dynasty also shewed themselves toward the close of the old red sandstone era.

Ages rolled on, new revolutions occurred,—all indicating progress, all marking steps in a Divine plan. The carboniferous era, with its enormous vegetation, dawned ; and then gigantic ferns, palm-trees, and coniferous trees grew, and left their accumulated remains to form coal-beds as the fuel of the modern world. The dry land enlarged ; islands were linked together, and formed continents ; everywhere the terrestrial masses vastly increased in bulk. The remains of this era shew a vast increase in the terrestrial flora, indicating an increment of soil. Immense forests, whose solitudes no mammiferous animal yet disturbed, flourished in the warm, damp temperature. The rich coal-fields of England and Scotland are the precious relics they have left. The tree-fern and the great sigillaria were then the monarchs of the woods. The enormous duration of the carboniferous era may be judged of from the calculation of Professor Phillips, that "it would require 122,400 years merely to accumulate sixty feet of coal." This world, however, at length closed, and the tertiary era dawned. The centre of Europe was now completed ; England still wanted her eastern portion. The site on which Paris and

London now stand was as yet a lake, into which the waters of several rivers were discharged, and in due time filled up the basin. The huge reptiles of the preceding era had disappeared, and a higher race of animals walked the earth—the number as well as the variety of living creatures being vaster. The temperature of the earth, though still high, was approaching its present condition. Decaying vegetable and animal structures, uniting with the crumbling rocks, formed soil. The new red sandstone, the oolite, and the chalk succeeded each other. All things were tending towards one grand result. The granite, the Silurian, the old red sandstone, the carboniferous vegetation were all but means for the formation of that little dark-coloured superficial layer we call the vegetable soil; and the object of this latest formation was, that rational, immortal man might occupy the scene. And now, when the huge tertiary monsters at length slept their stony sleep, the earth was ready for its lord. Then man, the youngest and fairest of all created things, for whom all these vast preparations had been going on,—on whose account a beneficent Creator had fitted up this gorgeous dwelling-place and stored it so munificently,—man, “the paragon of animals,” entered and took possession of his fair domains. For him, through countless ages, were these vast beds of crumbled rock and decayed animal and vegetable remains laid down; for his use

these treasures underneath the surface of the earth had been accumulated—the coal, limestone, and mineral deposits; and now, as heir of all the ages, he enters on his inheritance.

Said I not truly that geology has its poetry, and that of the noblest type? What a grand subject for an epic poem would be the fortunes and vicissitudes of the pre-Adamite earth,—the rise, decline, and fall of its empires and dynasties! How the imagination might linger over those strange existences, whose remains are enclosed in their strong sepulchres, and delight in picturing the condition of earth, when these creatures trod its surface, rejoicing in their strength, and drinking in enjoyment from a thousand fountains of happiness,—all proclaiming the beneficence and wisdom of the omnipotent Creator! What high employment the poetic fancy might find in reconstructing those wondrous forms, faintly but accurately sketched on the solid rock; or in shadowing forth the outline of world after world, as it bloomed and decayed, in the great primeval morning of time! And then, what themes for imagination to work upon in the appearance and disappearance of noble races, each having its appointed day, and, at the close, the tomb and the sleep of death, and as successor a still nobler dynasty—death ever passing into a higher life, and all pointing to the great consummation, the human period! How vividly the imagination might

contrast man's brief day on earth with the geologic eras of the past !

- “ We who for threescore years and ten
Toil downwards from our birth,
Deem sixty centuries of men
A ripe old age for earth.
- “ But all our deeds, though back we look
With yearning keen and fond,
Fill but a page ; the mighty book
Lies fathomless beyond.
- “ She is not old, or waxing cold,
But vigorous as of yore,
When 'mid her kindred globes she roll'd,
Exulting evermore.
- “ Six thousand years of human strife
Are little in the sum—
A morning added to her life,
And noon-day yet to come.
- “ Six thousand years, and what are they ?
A cycle scarce begun,—
The fragment of a grander day,
Unmeasured by the sun.”

Then, how these geologic studies enlarge our views of the Divine plan of the universe,—how they expand our conceptions of that Being who is from everlasting to everlasting ! What miracles of beauty,—what lavish skill and adornment,—what profundity of aim,—what grandeur, bounty, and beneficence may the poetic eye trace in all these relics of the ancient worlds ! On them the sun shone as brightly as on our own world. The waves rolled, and sparkled, and foamed as they are doing to-day ; the forests, and

broad savannas, and prairies were teeming with life ; the lakes and rivers were crowded with living inhabitants that have not now a representative on earth. Beauty and Divine skill were as lavishly bestowed on all created things, when there was no rational being to admire or adore, as when man became the high priest of nature, and the student of God's immeasurable plans. These are the poetic themes that geology suggests, while it conducts us amid the wonders of God's creation, and discovers to us the texture of that garment, so complex and beautiful, that has been woven "in the roaring loom of time," and which Deity has wrapped around Him at various creative epochs, and then "changed like a vesture," and folded up, and laid aside in the successive evolutions of His mighty plans :—

“ In the infinite creation
Lies no dead unmeaning fact,
But eternal revelation,
Deity in endless act,—
Life that works and pauses never,
Death that passes into life,
Rest that follows motion ever,
Peace that ever follows strife.
Evermore the worlds are fading,
Evermore the worlds will bloom,
To refute our weak upbraiding,
To throw brightness on the gloom.
Ever the imperfect passes,
But the perfect ever grows,
Forests sink to drear morasses,
Fairer landscapes to disclose.”

In truth, these "fairy tales of science" are far more wonderful than all other tales—more enrapturing than all the stories of genii, enchanted castles, witches, and giants that ever fiction penned. What are the changes produced by Aladdin's wonder-working lamp, compared with the actual transformations that earth has undergone since her granite floors were laid! How astonishing the fact that this beautiful, flower-decked world, with all its animal and vegetable growths, has been formed out of the basis of the original granite! Yet such is literally the fact. Each successive world was formed out of that which preceded it, the ground-up granite furnishing the original materials, and the plant, the animal, the action of heat, water, and air supplying other elements. The particles of the primitive rocks entered into a thousand new combinations, and underwent innumerable transformations—now in fresh rock formations, now in vegetable growths, and now in the structures of animals. Man himself, in his mortal part, may be regarded as an extract from the granite—a fine essence concentrated from the flinty particles of the primitive rocks. The original granite mountain was worn down into minute particles, which were taken up by water and spread over the surface of the earth; here they entered into the composition of plants whose roots drink, in rain and spring water, large quantities of dissolved flint. The animal devoured the plant, and

so these particles entered into a higher life. Man, in his turn, eats the animal or the plant, and thus builds up his earthly tabernacle with the original granite particles variously compounded. In fact, in every drop of water we swallow there are some little atoms of flint held in solution ; in the cabbage, beans, and other vegetables that we eat there are quantities of dissolved flint, impalpable to the senses, and which thus go to the construction of our bodily frames. In the course of a lifetime we thus dispose of a considerable slice of granite. Curiously enough, what is now part of a man once formed part of a mountain ; and in the ceaseless circulation of matter, the endless renewal by destruction that is going on, the particles composing our bodies may be again employed in the construction of some cloud-capped hill. "All flesh is grass;" and to go a step farther back, all flesh is granite. If it be true that "in the midst of life we are in death," it is no less true that in the midst of death we are in life. Gigantic mountains, huge continents are swept down to the bottoms of seas—all that lives dies, but life still triumphs. That which seemingly perishes only changes its form, and rises and lives again. Resurrection follows death, and new life springs from the grave. The flinty rock, dissolved, refined, almost spiritualised, rises with the gentle water-drops, into the delicate roots of plants. Wanting this food, no wheat, oats, or barley could

grow. Mounting upwards, sily, slowly, these flinty particles form the straw of the rich wheat plant, and the stalk of grass—structures which surpass in beauty and boldness man's proudest temples, so beautiful, yet so airy and solid, that the rain cannot enter, and the wind can bend, but not break the elastic pillar. And thus, through this hollow column, the plant draws up rich food for man, and stores it away in its chambers till the autumn comes, and finds the head bending with golden grain ; and so through vein and artery, the particles of the stone become part and portion of the being into which God himself has breathed the breath of life. These marvels of science may rudely dissolve the wonder-dreams of our childhood ; but so far from banishing poetry from our minds, they awaken richer trains of poetic thought, and pile wonder on wonder higher far than all the imagination has ever bodied forth in its loftiest flights :—

“ I grieve not that ripe knowledge takes away
The charm that nature to my childhood wore,
For with the insight cometh day by day
A greater bliss than wonder was before.
To win the secret of a weed's plain heart
Reveals the clue to spiritual things.
The soul that looks within for truth may guess
The presence of some unknown heavenliness.”*

One of the most interesting chapters in geology is that which describes the formation of coal. Little do we think, as we gather round the cheerful hearth,

* J. Russell Lowell.

while the winter storm is howling without, and a fierce nor'-easter is hurling the snow-drift against the windows, and as, poker in hand, we proceed to break up a lump of "bright, round coal,"—little do we think what a wonderful history that piece of black mineral has had. Not only does it yield heat and light, but also poetry. That dark mass is a fragment from a tree that grew in the primeval forest countless millenniums before man's creation. The period during which the earth was taking in her stock of coal for world-consumption is called by geologists, as we have seen, the carboniferous era. Her coal-cellars were dug very deep indeed, immediately over the old red sandstone. Fortunately for us, however, these stores have been elevated in many places near the surface, and so placed within man's reach. Never before or since was the earth covered with such a rank vegetation as during the period when our coal-beds were deposited. The atmosphere was then warm and moist; and carbonic acid gas, which forms the chief food of plants, was far more abundant then than at present. These conditions favoured the development of a rank vegetation; and this vast growth served a double purpose—it subtracted from the air the excess of noxious gas, and thus prepared for a higher animal life; while, at the same time, its remains, deposited in huge basins, underwent a chemical change that transformed them into coal, so essential for civilisa-

tion and human comfort. Thus the generator of that mechanical force that was destined to drive our steam-ships, railway trains, power-looms, to work our factories and printing-presses, and do all the world's drudgery, was, myriads of ages since, formed out of the superabundant carbonic acid gas, the sunbeams, and the mud of low-lying delta lands. In reality, as remarked by George Stephenson, the motive-power that works the steam-engine is "light bottled up in the earth for tens of thousands of years,—light absorbed by the plants and vegetables; and, after being buried in the earth for long ages in fields of coal, that light is again brought forth and liberated, and made to work, as in the locomotive, for great human purposes." Let us try to get an idea of the wonderful process by which this great agent of civilisation was formed.

The researches of geology shew that during the coal-forming era the chief forms of vegetation were marshy plants, luxuriating in low, muddy delta-lands, like the cypress swamps of the Mississippi, or the Sunderbunds of the Ganges. Favoured by heat and moisture, vast vegetable-growths shot up and decayed, age after age. The *lepidodendra*, seventy feet in height, shot forth their spiky branches; vast tree-ferns and tall reeds, with stems as massive as those of our forest trees, rose out of the water; pines, in dark forests, covered the hills. Rivers

rushed along, loaded with drift-wood, pine trees, and leaves; and these, collecting in vast rafts, became water-logged, sank to the bottom, and being gradually embedded in sand and mud, became in due time chemically altered into coal. It is now an established doctrine of geology that at least some of the coal-seams originated, in this way, from the deposition of drift-wood in the mud and ooze of the sea-bottoms. Still, by far the greater proportion of these coal-beds arose from the decay and entombment of vegetation on the spot *where it grew*—the swampy plains of the land. Where these huge growths arose they sank into their tombs, were covered over, and in due time converted into coal. This latter theory of their formation has been generally accepted since Sir William Logan's discovery that each coal-seam, for the most part, rests upon a bed of fire-clay, which, with its embedded roots, marks the site of an ancient soil. It is not uncommon to find "erect stems of trees passing down through the coal-seams, and spreading out their divergent roots in the clay below, exactly as they must have done when they flourished green and luxuriant in the times of the carboniferous era."* In the coal-fields of Cape Breton, from which we get our supplies, a very remarkable appearance was presented in one locality. Four planes were laid

* Geikie's "Story of a Boulder."

bare, placed one over the other, and each supporting its group of erect stems of trees, and exhibiting in all seven ancient soils with their covering of vegetation. These trees must have grown on the spot where their upright stems are still to be seen ; and consequently the accompanying coal-seams originated, not from vegetation drifted by river-action, but from vegetation that there grew up. Under almost all coal-beds vegetable soil can be traced, thus unmistakably indicating their origin. Thus, where the miner, far down in the bowels of the earth, amid damp and dripping caverns, is excavating the coal, richly-clad forests bloomed and decayed, century after century. These vast jungles and forests, invaded by the changing currents of the river, were buried slowly in sediment deposited by its waters ; or the area on which they grew was submerged in the sea, and over this sunk forest mud accumulated for centuries. In due time the muddy bottom of the sea became dry land, and waved with a new forest, which in its turn sunk, to form new coal-beds. The same process was repeated age after age ; forest after forest spread its mantle of green over the low, swampy lands, and each in turn floundered amid the muddy waters,—the whole sunken vegetation forming the vast coal-measures, many thousand feet in thickness.

Had these treasures been retained where they

were originally formed, they would have been for ever buried in the earth, far beyond the reach of man. But, by gigantic subterranean forces, the original deposits of coal have been broken up, changed in position, brought nearer the surface, and so placed within the reach of man. Geology affords invaluable aid in the discovery of coal, and saves the waste of time and money in searching for it where it cannot possibly be found. The practised eye of the geologist at once detects the formations in which coal may be looked for. For example, he would at once pronounce it useless to search for this mineral in the neighbourhood of St John's ; because the whole peninsula of Avalon is composed of the lower slate formation, and contains no rocks of the carboniferous series, in which alone coal-beds occur. Newfoundland, however, has its coal regions,—like all its other treasures, yet unexplored. In the neighbourhood of St George's Bay, it is well known, there is a tract of country, twenty miles in length and twelve in breadth, in which the coal strata crop out in many places. These beds are a continuation of the great coal-fields of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, on the opposite side of the gulf. One day, we cannot doubt, the black smoke from the mouth of many a coal-mine will darken the air of this region ; and the heavy sobbing of the steam-engine, dragging up the precious treasures, will re-echo amid the forest solitudes. Our

island has an area not far short of that of England ; and yet it sustains but 120,000 inhabitants, scattered along its coasts, and employed wholly in fishing. The breadth of land under culture is as yet quite insignificant. It is very true that much of the island, especially along its eastern shore, is uninviting to the agriculturist ; it is true that the ugly coating of bog, that covers so much of the explored portion, acts like a great sponge in retaining the moisture, covering the surface with so many ponds or lakelets, and so preventing the formation of large rivers to drain the soil ; it is true that, as far as we are acquainted with its soil, much of the surface is covered with drifted materials, consisting of clay, sand, embedded boulders, and fragments of rocks rafted hither probably by icebergs, when the island lay at the bottom of the sea. I suppose it was the desolate aspect thus presented that induced the belief said to be current among the Red Indians who resorted hither, that when the Great Spirit was forming the American continent He flung the chips, broken fragments, and useless materials into a heap, and so formed Newfoundland. The belief that our island is only a heap of "shot rubbish," on which fishermen may dry their fish and nets, though long and widely prevalent, is simply the result of ignorance. If you want to know what industry can accomplish, look at the smiling farms around St John's, and remember that the soil here is naturally

the very worst in the island. The western portion contains many noble tracts of fertile soil, without a single settler; and the unexplored interior may contain many more. In "the good time coming" these will be colonised and cultivated; the rich mineral treasures will be worked; and Newfoundland will cease to be renowned only for fogs, cod-fish, and seal-oil.

Perhaps no revelation of geology stirs the imagination more strongly than that which shews us that, since the earliest ages, the land has been slowly but ceaselessly passing into the sea, and again emerging from it; so that all existing lands have been again and again sea-bottoms. Even the snow-capped mountain gives unmistakable evidence that it once dwelt at the bottom of the ocean, and the sandstone hill, on which gigantic trees have now rooted themselves, was once a mass of loose sand down in the fathomless depths of the sea. The organic remains embedded in mountain-chains, table-lands, and plains prove that they were deposited, inch by inch, during vast æons of the past eternity, at the bottoms of seas, and slowly raised by the upheaving forces into their present positions. The two great processes of creation and destruction are thus in continuous and antagonistic action. The moment the dry land is raised aloft, a host of destructive agents are at work, tooth and nail, to hurl it down again to the bottom of the ocean. The hills, by the action of rain, frost,

torrents, and air, are gradually crumbled down into the valleys. The hardest rocks cannot resist the teeth of these untiring agents. The water filters through the rock, parts with its carbonic acid, chemically decomposes the solidest materials, loosening the joints and undermining the strength even of the granite, trap, and sandstone; and then the frosts expand the water in the crevices, and wrench off enormous fragments. The rivers take up the spoils, grind them into minute particles, carry them off and scatter them over the floor of the ocean, where they are hardened into rock, as solid as that whence they were derived. As ages roll on, these are raised, and once more form portions of the dry land, are clothed with vegetation, and covered with animal races. The sea, moreover, is ceaselessly thundering against the cliffs, battering them down, and encroaching on the low-lying shores. This vast process is going on to-day, just as in the earliest periods,—eating away old lands, and forming new continents and islands at the bottoms of seas. Even the interior of the globe bears its part in the transmutations of matter. The internal furnace fuses and melts the rocks,—passing them through its fiery ovens, and dragging them from their hiding-places in the depths of the earth, and at length, in fierce fury, throws them out of volcanoes as lava streams; and thus they enter into the composition of new lands. The glacier, too, is at work

as a destructive agent, rending fragments from the mountains, carrying them to the sea, and exporting them, packed in the iceberg, to more sunny climes. From the icy regions of the north, the icebergs that are floating past our shores are bearing, as their freight, the rocks and stones of the Arctic mountains, dropping them, as they melt, in the bosom of the Atlantic, on the banks of Newfoundland, or the low shores at the mouth of the St Lawrence; and thus circulating matter from the pole towards the equator, and building up new continents at the bottom of the ocean. Rivers are depositing the particles washed down by their waters at their mouths, and thus creating deltas. Lower Egypt has thus been formed by the Nile; the Mississippi and Ganges are bearing down masses of sand, mud, and fertile soil, intermixed with huge vegetable corpses, and building up peninsulas and islands far out into the sea. Thus there is only one doom for all existing lands—they must be ground up and deposited at the bottoms of seas, to rise again in nature's vast mutations and resurrections. Could we with prophetic eye look into the future, we should see the continents and islands of our globe sinking like mighty wrecks in the abysses of ocean, and in new forms rising, to be again washed back into the calm, impassive ocean. As the lands are thus melted down, some of their vegetable and animal growths are sure to be embedded in the soft mud, where they

are gently interred. The mud above them hardens into rock; they are entombed in its centre, and become the organic remains which future geologists shall explore, and by the aid of which they will construct a history of the wrecked continent whose fragments are thus preserved in the archives of nature. The geologist of to-day can point to masses of rock, thousands of feet in thickness, and covering large areas of the globe, formed out of hardened sediment that had been worn down by rivers, or wasted by the sea. Take, for example, that sandstone eminence called Signal Hill, that guards the entrance of our harbour.* It is a mass of sandstone rising 520 feet above the level of the sea, and sinking below probably to vast depths. Once it was slowly deposited as mud and sand at the bottom of the ocean, and in the course of ages elevated into a hill; now it is undergoing the grinding process, and you have only to imagine a sufficiently long time, and the sea will again flow over its ruins. Nature delights to bring about astounding results by slow and almost imperceptible processes. Her forces are unhasting, but unrelaxing. The gentlest of them wear down what we call "the everlasting hills"—an epithet to which they have no claim. Ocean knows no change,—

"Time writes no wrinkle on its azure brow,
Such as creation's dawn beheld, it rolleth now."

* St John's.

But the mountains are, like man, subject to decay and death :—

“ We sleep, and wake, and sleep, but all things move ;
The sun flies forward to his brother sun ;
The dark earth follows, wheel'd in her ellipse ;
And human things returning in themselves,
Move onward, leading up the golden year.”

TENNYSON.

Glance with me once more for a single moment at the tale geology tells about the formation of the limestone beds, and say whether it does not add another province to the poetical domain when read by “the light that never was on sea or shore.” Time will barely permit me to mention that these limestone rocks were slowly elaborated at the bottoms of estuaries, and consist of the calcareous deposits of minute creatures that propagated by myriads in the water of seas or rivers. Slowly, age by age, these creatures sank to the bottom, and gradually built up limestone beds many hundred feet in thickness. Fancy the enormous periods required for such a process, when “each successive annual layer would hardly settle down more perceptibly or more rapidly than the flickering dust that mottles the floor of some old haunted chamber.” If you carefully examine any limestone rock, you find it abounding in the fossil remains of minute shell-fish. The Nummilitic limestone which has furnished the huge blocks for the Pyramids of Egypt is in reality a concretion of small

shells chambered with the most perfect symmetry, and deposited in the course of innumerable ages. Let us never fancy, then, that any creature, introduced into the range of being by the adorable Creator, ever lives in vain.

In closing, permit me to refer, very briefly, to a few of the more extraordinary animals with whose remains geology makes us acquainted. In this department of the stony science, also, we find ample suggestions addressed to the poetic imagination. On all hands it is admitted that there has been a gradual rise in the type of animated beings, from the earliest period till the present epoch. The facts revealed by geology seem to point to a beginning of organised life on the globe, however distant that era may be in the depths of the past. Undoubtedly there has been a progression in creation—the whole animal world, from its lowest to its highest forms, being one vast ascending series of organic structures, gradually increasing in complexity of organisation and perfection of development. The patient industry of the geologist, during the last few years, has been rewarded by bringing him, as he believes, within view of the dawn of the animal world—the aboriginal creations—the very beginnings of life. At all events, he has reached that mysterious border land which divides the organic and inorganic world, beyond which all is darkness as to the origin of life. How profoundly interesting to

look upon the first order of animal existences that were endowed with the mysterious property of life when Nature was yet, as it were, trying "her 'prentice hand" on the earliest structures! Yet these primitive animals, so simple in structure as to present during life the appearance of jelly, have left behind them microscopic shells of exquisite beauty and symmetry; and in the vast geological strata which they built up, age after age, they have left rocky monuments of themselves, in which their remains lie entombed. Not in vain have the *protozoa* lived and died,—they were among the chief architects of the earth's crust. As world-builders, these tiny creatures were working for us. But though the invertebrate animals led the way,—though the oldest Cambrian rocks contain no traces of a higher life than the little radiated zoophyte named *Oldhamia antiqua*—and though the vertebrate animals followed, beginning with fishes and ending with mammalia, yet the attempts to prove that the higher are a development from the lower have hitherto proved conspicuous failures.

From the tiny zoophyte to the gigantic Saurian dynasty, that lorded it over creation during the era of the new red sandstone, was an enormous stride. There was a time when the climate of England resembled the present climate of Africa; when a great river swept through the land, on the banks of which

bamboos and palms shot up in tropical luxuriance, and in whose deltas the huge reptiles of this era disported. The *ichthyosaurus* and *plesiosaurus*, huge oceanic giants, fought and devoured one another—monster forms of prodigious bulk and frightful voracity. The *pterodactylus*, the bat of primeval nights, now roamed about—a flying dragon, having a spread of wings of twenty-seven feet, that enabled it to soar to incredible heights, and fall like lightning on its prey. Hugh Miller describes it as having the jaws and teeth of the crocodile, added to the wings of a bat and the tail of an ordinary mammal. The sweep of its twenty-seven-foot wings, as it opened its crocodile jaws, armed with sixty teeth, and darted on its prey, must have been truly terrific. Another of this class, rejoicing in the name of *cetiosaurus*, was about sixty feet in length. Most remarkable of all, however, was the *labyrinthodon*, a gigantic frog, equal in size to a rhinoceros, and not less than thirty feet in length. This huge frog had jaws of immense length, furnished with more than a hundred fangs, the skin scaly and, in some places, protected by bony plates. In the Devonshire quarries a large cemetery of these monsters has been discovered. Lyell holds that if the same climate and conditions of life were brought back in England, these reptiles would again be tyrants of the scene.

The age of great birds succeeded that of the rep-

tiles. One of these, called the *dinornis*, stood twelve feet high, its bones exceeding those of the largest horse. A still more gigantic bird has left nothing behind it but its foot-marks on the sandstone of Connecticut Valley. Its "foot-prints on the sands of time" are there, but no specimen of the creature has yet been found. The great mammals next trod the scene. The *dinotherium*, one of the largest quadrupeds that ever lived, carried about with him two immense pickaxes, in the shape of two bent tusks, with which he grubbed up the largest trees and the toughest roots for food. The *mastodon*, of which a complete skeleton is exhibited in the British Museum, was about the height of the largest elephant, but attained the enormous length of twenty-five feet, each of its grinders weighing from seventeen to twenty pounds.

The limits of a lecture will not permit me to follow these topics farther. I have been able merely to indicate a few of the poetical aspects of geology; but these will readily suggest others, and you will soon discover that the seeing eye and the sympathetic heart will find poetry in every department of the stony science. It is true that

" The dull see no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stone, or spirit in the air ;"

but to the understanding heart, Nature, in all its

departments, speaks of beauty and divinity, and connects itself with the spiritual and the unseen, lifting the soul to the mighty, beneficent Parent of all. All true and lofty poetry must lay hold on the Divine element that mingles in all, and thus conduct to God. This is pre-eminently true of the poetry of geology: it points with reverential hand to Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" who has presided over the vast cycles of the past eternity, guiding their changes and convulsions, and working out that Divine plan which we can but dimly divine. Wonderful is that mighty web that has been weaving during the æons of the past—its threads of granite, its ornaments the porphyry, the precious stones, the veins of gold and silver, the rocks of fairy form, twined and intertwined; tree, beast, bird, fish, insect all filling in the woof, all weaving for God the imperial robes that He has wrapt around Him; but all telling us that He is in all, and yet above and apart from all—the Creative Spirit that moulds the earth and guides the spheres. If, then, geology, in its lofty song, sings of the ages when earth bore series after series of plants and animals, but no rational, immortal intelligence, and tells us that, compared with these periods, measured by hundreds and thousands of centuries, man's day is but a small ripple in the ocean of eternity; yet does it, too, suggest a

glorious and lengthened future for our globe and for our race, during which vast and inconceivable strides of progress will be taken by man, ere the day shall arrive when he must give place to some nobler existence—when “the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up,” and “a new heavens and new earth” shall emerge from the ruins. And if there is something solemn and saddening in the thought that the reign of death has been universal—that the earth on which we tread is but a huge cemetery, and that all the beauty and splendour of the former worlds lie interred beneath our feet,—that man, too, equally with the weakest and strongest, must enter the still abodes, and all that is now so bright and fair, all that is tender in human affection and glorious in human thought, must sleep beside the mastodon and ichthyosaurus, yet the clear eye of faith, guided by God’s written revelation, looks away from “the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds” to the bright abodes of immortality, and the soul defies all the destructive agencies of earth to shake its trust in God. To the soul, in the noblest sense, death is life—immortal life—and the grave, too, a gift of Infinite Goodness.

“ With a grand renunciation,
Let him leave to earth and sun,
For another generation,
All the good that he has done.

Knowing that the laws eternal
Never, never can deceive ;
Raised above the sphere diurnal,
And too noble far to grieve.
Glad that he has been the agent
Of the Universal Heart;
That, in life's majestic pageant,
He has play'd no worthless part."

LECTURE THE SIXTH.

IRELAND—HER HISTORY AND HER PEOPLE.

WITH its back to Europe, and its face to the west,—receiving the full shock of the mighty billows of the Atlantic on its northern, western, and southern shores—stands the fair and fertile island named Ireland. A narrow sea, which at one point is but thirteen miles in width, severs it from the larger island of Great Britain.

The name Ireland is partly Celtic and partly Saxon in its origin. Its most ancient appellation, and that to which its people still cling with the attachment of veneration, was Eri, or Erin, which is derived from the Celtic Iar or Eir, signifying western. When the Saxons came to know it, they added to the native name Iar, their own term “land,” and called it Iarland or Ireland. Thus Erin and Ireland are from the same root, and signify the western land.

Its greatest length does not exceed three hundred miles ; its breadth is between eighty-five and a hundred and ten miles. So admirably has nature adapted it for commerce, by indenting its coasts with harbours, arms of the sea, and mouths of rivers, that scarcely an acre of land in the country is more than fifty miles from the sea, or from good navigation. This little isle—a speck of earth—a mere freckle on the surface of the globe—has a history which, though generally dark and sad, stretches away back, amid the waves of time, far beyond the Christian era. A race have trod its soil who have made themselves felt in almost every country of the globe. To civilisation they have communicated some of its most quickening impulses ; to science, poetry, oratory, history, art, they have given some of their most illustrious names. Heroic souls, whose achievements are conspicuous on the rolls of fame, and whose thoughts have influenced the world's destinies, claim Ireland as their birth-place. Glory has blended with her dust. It is a land of song—of gorgeous traditions—of heroic memories. Its monuments tell, in their gray ruins which have withstood the storms of time, of a great past, to which the hearts of its people fondly and proudly turn. The voice of soldiers, scholars, poets, saints, speaks from that dim past, amid the echoes of the ages as they sweep along “the corridors of time.” And how rich and plaintive the music that comes

from this region of song, stirring the pulses of the heart with its notes of sadness, or flushing the cheek with its passion and frenzy! That music, low and sweet, martial or melancholy, melting into softness, or kindling to heroic ardour, has gone direct to the heart of the world. It tells of woes, wrongs, oppressions, as it sobs over the historic past. It seems to be the pathetic utterance of an imaginative, high-souled, proud, and passionate race, who are endeavouring to escape from a dreary present, by taking refuge in the memories of a gorgeous past. Strikingly does it contrast with their wit and humour, gay, glancing, tender, buoyant, as though they were entire strangers to sighs and tears. And when we add to these the fervour and genius of the people—their passionate love of country and kindred—their billiancy and fancy; and when we remember the lovely land they possess, its fields of emerald green, its “heaven-kissing” hills blooming to their summits, its valleys, whose streamlets seem to sing its legends, its ruins in their pale and melancholy splendour, and, around all, “ocean narrowing to caress her,” have we not a race and a land worthy our profoundest interests—a land of which it is hardly too much to say that

“One-half its soil has walk’d the rest
In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages?”

Ireland may be described as a great plain inter-

spersed with low hills, which around the sea-coasts rise into mountain-ranges. The highest of these mountains, in Kerry, only reaches the height of 3400 feet. Nothing can surpass the beauty and magnificence of the coast-scenery; and while the interior has many a bleak and rugged region, and many a hideous flat and bog, it also contains spots of the rarest loveliness. The Vale of Avoca is famous in song: Killarney vies with the Highland lake-scenery of Scotland, with Windermere, Geneva, and Como; and Connemara, with its wild grandeur, its balmy air, and "the poetry of its immense and lonely sea," has charms to touch all hearts. The genial influence of the Gulf Stream softens the climate of Ireland, diffuses a mild and moist atmosphere, and so tempers the rigours of winter, that a mantle of living green wraps its shores, while in the same latitude, on this side the Atlantic, the coasts of Labrador are fast bound in fetters of ice. The vast volumes of vapour, rising from this great mass of warm water that washes the shores of Ireland, being wafted over the island by westerly winds, clothe its hills and vales in perpetual verdure. To the Gulf Stream it is therefore indebted for that bountiful supply of moisture that makes it the Emerald Isle, and renders its pasture-lands the finest in the world. These rain-clouds from the Atlantic, that drop fertility over the land, are not,

however, without their disadvantages and drawbacks. In many districts, the wheat and other cereal crops are harvested with difficulty, excessive rains often blighting the hopes of the farmer. On this account mainly, it cannot, as a wheat-growing country, be compared with England or the Lowlands of Scotland ; but its grazing and dairy farms are unrivalled. Not without reason has the trefoil or shamrock been chosen as the heraldic emblem of the Green Isle, its rich herbage being, in fact, its inexhaustible mine of gold ; and for this, as we have seen, it is mainly indebted to the Gulf Stream. The fact that at this hour, under an improved system of agriculture, and with new energies infused into the population, there is a steady decline in the productiveness of the principal crops, in consequence of the conversion of tillage into pasture-lands, shews that the country is found to be better adapted for pastoral farming than for the growth of wheat or other cereals, and that the tendency of the agriculture of the island is now in that direction more than formerly. It has been found that it is not the quantity of rain that falls, but the frequency of showers and cloudy weather that causes the humidity of the atmosphere. One consequence of this condition of the atmosphere is that the umbrella is an indispensable life-preserver in Ireland, or, as the Yankees say, "an institution ;" as, even in the finest day, it is hard to say how

soon an Atlantic cloud may burst over the devoted head of the traveller. It is very easy to get wet, but without going to the fire it is not easy to get dried, the atmosphere being so frequently charged with moisture. Arthur Young, an English traveller, who visited Ireland about a hundred years ago, was struck with the dampness of the climate, as compared with that of his own country; and remarked that, "if you wet a piece of leather, and lay it in a room where there is neither sun nor fire, it will not, in summer even, be dry in a month." A more serious drawback is, however, that the dampness of the climate, the source of vegetable wealth and beauty, has a tendency to relax the energies of the people, at least in the earlier stages of their progress, before mind has enabled them to grapple successfully with physical difficulties. Another feature of Ireland, caused also by the humidity of her climate, is the number and extent of her rivers and lakes. These secure a fine internal water-communication; but the terrible drawback is that, as a consequence of this superabundance, "one-seventh of her whole area is covered with bog." Ireland has the largest lake in the United Kingdom—Neagh, whose shores are low and flat, and its scenery tame and uninteresting. It has also the largest river in the British Isles—"the broad and brimming Shannon," navigable two hundred and forty miles from its mouth, and draining the

celebrated Bog of Allen. This bog is not, however, as is generally supposed, one huge morass; on the contrary, the bogs to which the name is applied are distinct from one another, and separated often by ridges of high and dry ground. The Shannon itself—half lake, half river—receives the drainage of these immense morasses; and, with a slow and almost imperceptible current, pours its waters into one of the noblest estuaries in the world. The mines of Ireland, though believed to be rich, will long continue to be of slight importance, unless a much larger capital is available for developing its mineral resources. Once the noblest forests covered almost the whole face of the country; but these have long since disappeared, and now the country is rather scantily wooded. A celebrated forest, named “Shillelagh,” formerly flourished, from which the toughest and best of oak was obtained. The cunning Saxon, when he came over, soon discovered its superiority to British oak; and, without permission asked or obtained, cut down and carried off quantities of it; and to this day Westminster Hall is roofed with this abstracted Irish oak. I need scarcely tell you that the wood of Shillelagh has given a name to a weapon which I hope none of our heads will ever encounter; for a “sprig of shillelagh,” wielded by the brawny arm of a Tipperary man, is rather trying to the constitution, and only seasoned heads can stand it.

Such, then, is the island on which nature has lavished so many bounties. Its people fondly reckon it

“ The first flower of the earth,
And first gem of the sea.”

But though we may regard this as a little pardonable exaggeration, springing from an affectionate patriotism, yet when we consider the fertility of its soil, the beauty of its scenery, the salubrity of its climate, the advantages of its position in regard to commerce, we must admit that few lands have in such profusion the elements of prosperity and greatness; and we need not wonder at the passionate attachment of its children to their own “green isle of the ocean :”—

“ The savage loves his native shore,
Though rude the soil, and chill the air ;
Then well may Erin’s sons adore
Their isle, which nature form’d so fair.

“ What flood reflects a shore so sweet
As Shannon great, or pastoral Bann ?
Or who a friend or foe can meet
So generous as an Irishman ?”

From the country we now turn to the inhabitants—their history and their characteristics. The great bulk of the population are of the pure Celtic race, the exception being the Protestant population of the North, who are Anglo-Saxons—the majority of them being descendants of colonists from the Lowlands of Scotland, or of some of Cromwell’s Puritan Ironsides

who settled here. Apparently there has been in Ireland an intermixture of the two races ; but in reality, though for centuries the Celt and Saxon have been living side by side on the same soil, no amalgamation has followed. Differences of races, of language, of religion, together with historical antipathies which are still active, have operated to keep the two races apart so completely that the slight fusion which has occurred is not worth reckoning. This, I think, is not to be regretted ; nature does not pronounce in favour of an amalgamation of two races so wide apart in their instincts and habits as the Celtic and Saxon. Of the Anglo-Norman stock there was originally no inconsiderable element ; many of the great landowners—non-resident for the most part—are of this descent, though the Norman blood, from other intermixtures, is now hardly discernible. In Ireland the Celtic race has been preserved in more complete purity than in any other land ; but it would be difficult to conceive of any people being more unfavourably circumstanced in regard to national development. That there is no inherent defect in the old Celtic stock is evident from even a slight examination of their history. Whence this great branch of the human family came originally, no one can tell. All we know with any certainty is that long before history had indited her first page, this great wave of human population came surging from the East, and spread over all Western

Europe. They occupied Gaul,—the country now called France,—North Italy, Spain, Britain, and Ireland. A most warlike people were the Celts. For four centuries they resisted the iron arm of Rome, and disputed with her the empire of the world. Under Brennus, they sacked Rome ; they vanquished the Romans at Allia, at Thrasymene, at Cannæ, reducing their enemy to the extremity from which she was saved by the prowess of Marius. They carried their terrible arms into Greece, and sacked the temple of Delphi. They defied Alexander the Great, and “overthrew the phalanx in the plains of Macedon.” As mercenaries they fought the battles of Carthage. They defeated Attila. Under Charles Martel they forced the Crescent to retire for ever from the West, and saved Christendom from the Mohammedan yoke. Their most signal defeat was accomplished by the military genius of Julius Cæsar, who, after a fierce struggle, conquered Gaul, and formed it into a Roman province. This great conqueror also vanquished the British Celts, and established the supremacy of Rome in Britain. When the Roman legions withdrew from Britain, the more powerful Saxon pushed back the British Celts, who slowly retired, fighting desperately, into the fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall, and behind the mountain-ramparts of the Grampians. Ireland, however, was their great asylum ; and here, though pursued by the Anglo-Normans, as we shall

find, and vanquished, they have held their ground till the present day. The representatives of the great Celtic race now are the brilliant, warlike people of France, the Welsh Cymry, the Scotch Highlanders, and the Irish. It is in France they have reached their highest pitch of civilisation, shewing us what are the capabilities of the race when placed in favourable circumstances, and exhibiting a marked contrast to the Irish and British Celts. A race never loses its characteristics. The sunny East was the cradle of this people ; and to this day they display traces of their Oriental origin in their fiery impulsiveness, their fierce loves and hatreds, their indisposition to change, the continuity of their national habits, their tendency to enjoy the present moment and ignore to-morrow, and their indisposition to steady industry. M. Martin, the French historian, as quoted by Professor Goldwin Smith in his admirable little volume, "*Irish History and Irish Character*," thus characterises his countrymen : " From the beginning of historic time the soil of France appears peopled by a race lively, witty, imaginative, eloquent, prone at once to faith and to scepticism, to the highest aspirations of the soul and to the attractions of sense ; enthusiastic and yet satirical ; unreflecting and yet logical ; full of sympathy, yet restive under discipline ; endowed with practical good sense, yet inclined to illusions ; more disposed to striking acts of self-devotion than to patient and

sustained effort ; fickle as regards particular things or persons ; persevering as regards tendencies and the essential rules of life ; loving action and knowledge, each for its own sake ; loving above all war, less for the sake of conquest than for that of glory and adventure, for the attraction of danger and the unknown ; uniting, finally, to an extreme sociability, an indomitable personality, a spirit of independence, which absolutely repels the yoke of the external world, and the face of destiny." There is, no doubt, as Professor Smith remarks, a touch of French vanity in this picture of the Celts by a Celt. As to the "practical good sense" which the historian attributes to the French, Smith very justly says that "of the highest practical wisdom the political history of France can scarcely be called an example ;" and of their violent oscillations between extremes of all kinds, to which M. Martin points, he says, "It may lend an exciting interest to French history, and amuse while it troubles the world ; but the race which is conscious of such tendencies will do well, if it aspires to real greatness, not to boast of them, but to correct them." Let us hear another able writer, of quite a different stamp, on the characteristics of the Celtic race. Dr Knox, in his "Races of Men," says, "War is the game for which the Celt is made. Herein is the forte of his physical and moral character ; in stature and weight, as a race inferior to the Saxon ; limbs muscu-

lar and vigorous ; torso and arms seldom attaining any very large development—hence the extreme rarity of athletæ amongst the race ; hands broad ; fingers squared at the points ; step elastic and springy ; in muscular energy and rapidity of action surpassing all other European races. *Cæteris paribus*—that is, weight for weight, age for age, stature for stature—the strongest of men. Inventive, imaginative, he leads the fashions all over the civilised world. Most new inventions and discoveries in the arts may be traced to him ; they are then appropriated by the Saxon race, who apply them to useful purposes. In the ordinary affairs of life they despise order, economy, cleanliness ; of to-morrow they take no thought ; regular labour—unremitting, steady, uniform, productive labour—they hold in absolute horror and contempt. Irascible, warm-hearted, full of deep sympathies, dreamers on the past, uncertain, treacherous, gallant, and brave. They are not more courageous than other races, but they are more warlike. Notwithstanding their grievous defeat at Waterloo, they are still the dominant race of the earth. Children of the mist, even in the clear and broad sunshine of day, they dream on the past—nature's antiquaries. As looking on the darkening future, which they cannot try not to scan, by the banks of the noble Shannon, or listening to the wild roar of the ocean

surf as it breaks on the Gizna Briggs, washing the Morochmore ; or listlessly wandering by the dark and stormy coast of Dornoch, gaunt famine behind them, no hopes for to-morrow, cast loose from the miserable patch he held from his ancestry, the dreamy Celt, the seer of second sight, still clinging to the past, exclaims, at his parting moment from the horrid land of his birth, ‘ We’ll maybe return to Lochabar no more.’” Knox further tells us that the Celt does not make a good colonist or agriculturist, disliking the lonely forest and desert, and clinging to the town and hamlet ; while the Saxon fearlessly plunges into the prairie or forest, loving productive labour, and declining to build his house within sight of his neighbours, if he can avoid doing so.

An indisposition to continuous, productive labour is by most writers charged against the Celts generally, and the Irish Celts in particular ; and doubtless there must be some truth in the accusation. Still these sweeping charges must be received with caution. Patrick the Celt may not be a good plodder, or a strict economist ; but facts prove that he can and does toil tremendously, when there are sufficient inducements to labour. Here is one little fact that may be set over against the statements of philosophers on this point. The Irish emigrants who settled in America are known to have remitted, in the year 1847, the sum of £200,000 to aid the famishing rela-

tions they had left behind, to join them in their adopted country. In 1853, their remittances for the same purpose reached the enormous amount of one million and a half. Here then we find this people, on reaching a land where labour is well remunerated, toiling to some purpose, denying themselves, hoarding their earnings, that the loved ones in the dark cabins of Connaught and Munster might see happier days in a land of plenty. A noble and honourable deed truly, for which let all due applause be accorded. We must learn to distinguish between the faults and the misfortunes of the Irish. It is very true that they seek for excitement in preference to comfort. There may be some truth in the saying that "what an Englishman wants to make him happy is a full belly and a warm back ; what an Irishman wants to make him happy is a glass of whisky and a stick," and I suppose, in addition, a friend whom he may knock down for love, when he is "blue-mouldin' for want of batin'." This is the ludicrous side of the matter, and, as far as the past is concerned, the picture has too much truth in it. With improving circumstances, however, Patrick is leaving all his shillelagh feats and spirituous achievements aside, and getting a due appreciation of Saxon creature-comforts, of a wholesome meal, a warm coat, a snug cabin, and an unbroken head. Speaking of the past, one of themselves says, "We were idle, for we had

nothing to do ; we were reckless, for we had no hope ; we were ignorant, for learning was denied us ; we were drunken, for we sought to forget our misery. That time has passed away for ever."

Of the state of Ireland before its conquest by the English, I shall say but a few words. The first arrivals of the Celtic race were probably from the coasts of Spain. Tribe followed tribe, the one subduing and exterminating the other. The Irish annals relating to this dark period give suspiciously minute accounts of tribes called the Fomorians, Fir-bolgs, Tuatha-da-Danans, and Milesians, that in succession poured into Ireland ; but they are merely phantom shapes in a shadowy land ; and how much is legend, and how much, if any, is fact, in what is recorded of them, no one can tell. Bards and Sennachies have sung of Ollav-Fola, Hugoney the Great, Conn of the Hundred Battles, Fein M'Cooil or Fingal, Niall of the Nine Hostages, the Red Branch Knights, and other great kings and warriors. Tremendous stories are told of these, many of which, I am afraid, must be regarded as belonging to the genus "bouncers." Almost every one has heard of Fein M'Cooil, or, as he is commonly called, Finn Macool. He is usually represented in Irish legends as an enormous giant—one of the powerful but very stupid race of which Jack the Giantkiller made such havoc. In reality, however, Finn M'Cooil appears to have been a highly

respectable personage. Moore, in his History of Ireland, says he was son-in-law of King Cormac, who lived before the days of St Patrick, and general of the celebrated Fiana Eiriun, or ancient Irish militia. He is reported to have originated this military association, into which admission was attainable only by proofs of valour and intelligence; and each newly admitted member came under an express engagement to choose a wife solely for her merits, never to ill treat a woman, and never to turn his back on an enemy. Peace to the ashes of brave Finn M'Cooil, wherever they lie. He must have been considerably in advance of his age; and in bravery and veneration for woman seems to have anticipated chivalry itself.

The Celtic tribes of ancient Ireland appear to have been neither better nor worse than their contemporaries in other lands. They were, what we now, in the pride of our civilisation, term barbarians, living by the chase, and continually slaughtering one another, in savage wars. Their brethren, over the water in England, were quite as bad. Forests, morasses, bogs, covered the greater part of the country. Wild cattle roamed in the forest glades, deer bounded from the thickets, the wolf disputed for empire with man. If these were the "good old times," I think we may be thankful that a considerable interval severs us from them. The grand tale, so often repeated by Irish chroniclers, of a Milesian colony that arrived in

Ireland, only nine hundred years before Christ, and introduced arts and a high civilisation, is now admitted to be a pure myth. Thomas Moore, in his *History of Ireland*, calls it "a romance ;" and shews that the tribe led by Milesius, arrived about two hundred years before the Christian era, were classed under the general name of Scythians, and, except in warlike tendencies, were no better than their predecessors. Their tribal name was Scoti. From the predominance they acquired, the whole inhabitants were long called Scots ; and a branch of them having settled in North Britain, gave to that region the name of Scotland. The first great moral impulse was given to these rude tribes by St Patrick, who arrived in the year 432, and speedily converted the natives to Christianity. Previously, they had been votaries of Druidism. Such was the flame of enthusiasm kindled by this great apostle, that the Irish soon became a missionary church ; not only founding seats of piety and learning at home, but sending out apostles to other lands. In the centuries that followed the mission of St Patrick, the renowned establishments of Iona, Lindisfarne, and St Gall in Switzerland, were planted by Irish missionaries, and diffused the light of the gospel over many dark regions. During the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, Ireland was really the most famous seat of learning, such as it was in those days ; and the Saxons owned its mental superiority,

by sending their youths for instruction to such celebrated schools as Armagh and Clonmacnoise. "Charlemagne," says Professor Smith, "appreciated in the Irish preachers and scholars, powerful instruments of the civilisation which it was his mission to promote. He gave some of them places in his court, and employed them in the instruction of Frankish youth." The renowned scholar and first heretical teacher of the Middle Ages, John Scotus Erigena, was an Irishman, and a familiar guest of Charles the Bald of France. In connexion with John, a spark of Irish wit has come down to us from those dull old times, shewing that the talent for which Irishmen are still noted—ready wit—had begun to scintillate very early. This Irishman was known as "John the Scot;" and Charles the Bald, sitting opposite to him at table one day, attempted to "take him off," by asking "how far a *Scot* was removed from a *sot*." "Only by the breadth of the table, your majesty," was the quick reply of John. His majesty, I suppose, was obliged to join in the general laugh that followed, but with what degree of heartiness, I leave you to judge; for it was no secret that his majesty of the Bald Head was fond of a glass, or rather of a bottle, so that John's was a home-thrust. Charles, I am inclined to think, would hardly wish to exchange another pass with John the Scot in wit-combats.

Early in the ninth century, the terrible Danes

commenced their ravages on the coasts of Ireland. These were the fierce Scandinavian Norsemen, or Northmen, the pirates, traders, and colonists of these rude ages. Out of the cold and stormy North this people came at the call of Providence, to pour the kindling energy of a robuster race into the stagnant nations of the Old World. Their influence in shaping the present has been immense. That northern blood, tingling with electric fire, poured into the veins of the solid, plodding Scotch and English Saxon, formed him for future greatness; made him a sea-king,—a determined, liberty-loving freeman,—the world's great trader, coloniser, planter, builder, battler. No wonder that these fierce sea-rovers, landing on the shores of Britain only to pillage, burn, and kill, were painted as “the bloody Danes.” They were, however, one of the great instruments of Providence. Fortunately, they continued for ages to pour into England and the Lowlands of Scotland; and though subdued by Alfred, yet a large mass of them remained, and being of the same stock originally as the Saxons, amalgamated with them in kindly union, giving to the race that passion for the sea, that hunger for adventure, that restless tendency to explore and discover new lands, that has carried them to the ends of the earth. But other characteristics, usually reckoned thoroughly British, are also of Scandinavian

origin. English love of liberty, of free representative institutions, large and clear sincerity of character, frankness, resolute earnestness, power of endurance, fearlessness,—these come by our Norse fathers. The Normans, who under William the Conqueror subdued England, and finally mingled with the Saxons, were but another branch of the great Norse family that had long been settled in Normandy. Amid much suffering, they introduced into England a higher civilisation and a nobler method of life. It was these Normans, as we shall see, and not the Saxons, who conquered Ireland. But the great misfortune of Ireland was that it did not receive enough of the Scandinavian element to modify the character of the people. The Irish Celts were able to drive out the Danes almost completely; but in reality it was a loss to them as a people. At one time the Danes were masters of nearly the whole island; but the Irish rose against them, under Malichy, and completely vanquished them. It is of this Irish monarch Moore sings:—

“ Let Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her faithless sons betray’d her,
When Malichy wore the collar of gold
Which he won from the proud invader.
When her kings, with standard of green unfurl’d,
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger,
Ere the Emerald Gem of the Western world
Was set in the crown of a stranger.”

The indomitable Dane returned, and once more

obtained a footing. The Irish tribes, however, united under the renowned monarch, Brian Boroihme, or Boru; and in the great battle of Clontarf, within three miles of Dublin, the Irish were victorious, and the Danish power was finally broken. The brave Brian fell in this battle covered with glory; and to this day his memory is affectionately cherished in the hearts of his countrymen, after the lapse of 850 years. He was one of the best of Ireland's kings, and did much to unite hostile tribes, and introduce law and order among a wild people. So successful was he, that, according to a legend, a beautiful young lady, clad in jewelled robes, and carrying a gold ring of great value on a wand, rode unattended from one end of the kingdom to the other without meeting insult or injury. In the pretty ballad which Moore has written on this incident, he makes the heroine say, in reply to the inquiry of a knight who encountered her, and asked whether, possessed of so much beauty and wealth thus "unprotected," she did not feel nervous when wandering about—

“ Sir knight, I feel not the least alarm ;
No son of Erin would offer me harm ;
For though they love women and golden store,
Sir knight, they love honour and virtue more.

“ Then on she went, and her maiden smile
Lighted her safely round the green isle ;
And blest for ever was she who relied
Upon Erin's honour and Erin's pride.”

The story is so pretty that it would be shameful, as well as ungallant, to doubt it.

After the death of Brian,—whose descendants, by the way, are called O'Brians till this day,—matters fell into confusion; the monarchy was broken up; the independent tribes, called septs, acknowledged no superior but their chiefs, and carried on perpetual and destructive wars. When the eleventh century dawned, Ireland had declined; cultivation was almost unknown; barbarous tribes sheltered themselves in rude burrows of turf and mud; here and there a low-browed church raised its humble head. The land was the common property of the tribe that held it; the chief had the patriarchal power of parcelling it out among the septmen; but on the death of any of these, his share, instead of passing to his children, reverted to the tribe, and the chief proceeded to make a fresh distribution. The effect of this arrangement was, that the ownership of the soil remained practically in the hands of the chief, though he could not appropriate it for his personal benefit; the holder had but a life-interest in it, and however frequently parted with, it inevitably returned to the head of the clan. This kind of possession resembled an arrangement which existed in modern times between an Irishman and his pig, who in company made the tour of England. The pig, as the story goes, was of a peculiar Irish breed; of great sagacity and boundless buoy-

ancy of spirit ; lean, but muscular and springy of step ; with a back curved like the rainbow, and legs long and sinewy : it had all the vigour of a racehorse, and the elasticity of a greyhound. Between it and its master there was the most perfect understanding. As the pair traversed England, the owner sold his pig again and again. But the Saxon enclosure was not built that could confine this enterprising animal. English walls and gates it utterly despised ; and however often it was sold, it speedily rejoined its master on the road ; so that they went on lovingly together, parting with the secret assurance that they would soon meet again. So with the land of these tribes—the chieftain, in the exercise of his authority, gave it away to a clansman ; but back it came in the end, either to him or his successor in office. The step between common and separate ownership in land had not yet been taken—the transition, therefore, from the pastoral to the agricultural stage of society had not been accomplished. The unhappy relations existing at this day between the land-owner and the land-occupier in some districts of Ireland, shew that no great improvement has yet been effected on the old sept-system, in regard to security and permanency of tenure, so far as the cultivator of the soil is concerned. As long as suicidal rapacity on the side of the proprietor grasped, in the form of rent, the whole produce of the soil except the most wretched pit-

tance, barely sufficient to sustain the life of the occupier of the land, leaving to him to execute all improvements, but denying him for the most part any security of occupancy, we cannot wonder at the low moral and social state of the people. It is true that the action of the Land Court has introduced of late a better order of things, and gives hope of a fair adjustment between landlord and tenant being yet secured; but while the wretched con-acre system still prevails widely, and forty thousand holdings still exist of not more than one acre in extent, I fear "the good time coming" is only yet in sight. On this point Goldwin Smith says, "Have the beneficial effects of separate ownership of land been long experienced by the Irish peasantry? Has property in land, according to the English system, presented itself to him in the course of his history in the form of security, independence, domestic happiness, dignity, and hope? Has it not rather presented itself to him in the form of insecurity, degradation, and despair? It would be too much to say that modern Irish agrarianism is the direct offspring of primitive Irish institutions; but it is not too much to say, that even modern Irish agrarianism is rather the offspring of a barbarism prolonged by unhappy circumstances and bad government, than of anything more deserving of unqualified indignation."

To these septs, with their endless quarrels, jeal-

ousies, and sometimes bloody conflicts, we may trace those "factions" which have been such blots on the fair fame of Erin, and of which Carleton has given us such a terribly truthful picture. That the "factions" are not yet extinct, is evident from the fact that, quite recently, a prelate of the Roman Catholic Church had the courage to expose in the public prints the doings of two factions known as the Two-Year-Olds and the Three-Year-Olds, and published a fearful list of maimings and murders they had perpetrated on each other, turning the thunders of his denunciation against them. The original cause of quarrel, it seems, was a difference of opinion about the age of a young bull—one party asserting that it was two and the other three years old. It would seem as if, in some obscure districts, the civilisation which had reached a certain stage eight hundred years ago, had been then arrested and remained stationary ever since. Happily such cases as that referred to are now very rare in Ireland.

The year 1169 is memorable in the annals of Ireland. At that date the Anglo-Normans first effected a landing on the shores of Erin; and that conquest by England was commenced which proved so fruitful of woes to unhappy Ireland, and at length resulted in a harvest of retribution to England, which she is reaping in many a form at the present hour. It is usual with Irishmen to attribute the conquest of

their country to the Saxons ; and, in consequence, all the bitterness of their wrath has been poured out on this hated name. All their oppression has been traced to “the bloody hoof of the Saxon.” This, however, is pure imagination. It was the Anglo-Normans who were the invaders—the peaceable, home-loving Saxons had nothing to do with the matter. In fact, they were then themselves ground to the dust under the heel of the Norman conqueror ; and there is no evidence that they took part in the invasion of Ireland. These Norman knights, with their retainers, who now burst into Ireland, were, as we have seen, a branch of the Norse family. In fact, it was a return of the old hereditary foe, the Danes, who had been defeated on the plain of Clontarf, that now struck down Irish independence. The mailed Normans were the old Scandinavian searovers, in another guise, and more formidable array ; and it is utterly unfair to make the innocent Saxons accountable for their doings. The truth is, when once England had been subdued by these invaders, the conquest of Ireland was but a question of time ; and, considering the inferiority in size of the one country, its proximity to the English coasts, and above all, the disunion that prevailed among its people, its subjugation seemed as inevitable as that of Wales. Indeed, when the Normans first came to Ireland, the condition of the country was not greatly in advance

of that of Celtic England when Julius Cæsar landed on its shores. A number of independent and generally rival clans were scattered over the land, and it had no unity as a kingdom. An inferior civilisation placed alongside of a superior is sure to disappear before the advance of the latter.

It is easy to conceive how the Norman conquest might have been a blessing to Ireland, just as ultimately it proved in England. There the Normans completed their conquest, fixed their residence, identified their dignity with it; their children became natives of the soil and proprietors of the land; they imparted a higher impulse to the Saxon character, and in the end a complete fusion of the two was effected. Had the same thing happened in Ireland, its history, instead of being a tragedy, might have become a glorious epic. But for invaders and invaded alike the misfortune was that Ireland was only partially conquered; and the former were thus driven to sustain a condition of chronic warfare, the latter to prolong the agony, in frantic efforts to throw off the yoke. Thus from 1169 to 1800, the year of the Union, "the history of Ireland is that of a half-subdued dependency," carrying on a fierce but hopeless struggle against its conquerors. Had not the energies of the Normans been absorbed by the crusades and French wars, there is little doubt they would have completed the conquest of Ireland within

a brief period ; but, unhappily, their main strength being thus allured to other enterprises, the band of conquerors in Ireland had to stand on the defensive, and for ages held, with much difficulty, a tract of country round Dublin called "the Pale," with some towns on the coast—thus painfully holding their ground, as a garrison in a hostile country, and keeping up war, with its attendant horrors, against the natives of the soil. This wretched state of matters continued for two centuries, and proved fruitful in misery to both parties in the conflict. Here we find the root of those terrible evils that are felt to this day. Instead of blending, the two races converted the island into a battle-ground ; a contest raged for centuries, inflamed on both sides by the most rancorous passions. The contest assumed all the ferocity which characterises civil war ; hopeless rebellion was followed by confiscation and penal laws, provoking in turn burning hatred and fierce acts of vengeance. Then, when the Reformation came, to the contest of races was added the contest of hostile religions, thus immeasurably increasing the bitterness of the strife. When, then, we open the history of Ireland, and read there some of the darkest and saddest pages that have ever been written, let us remember the unhappy circumstances in which, from the outset, the conquerors and conquered alike were placed—circumstances quite beyond the control of either party, by which the land

was divided into two hostile camps, and the worst passions of the human heart perpetually inflamed; and this will keep us from judging of the whole in the narrow spirit of a partisan, and will suggest to us that we should extend "the charity of history" to both parties who took part in these dark transactions of former ages. The originating cause we can now clearly discern, enveloping alike conquerors and conquered in a terrible series of crimes and sufferings. "Thus," says Goldwin Smith, "at the commencement of the connexion between England and Ireland the foundation was inevitably laid for the fatal system of ascendancy; a system under which the dominant party were paid for their services in keeping down rebels by a monopoly of power and emolument, and thereby strongly tempted to take care that there should always be rebels to keep down."

What right had the Normans to invade Ireland? Be it remembered that these were the days of conquest, when invasion was almost a matter of course, and was far from appearing immoral or wrong in the eyes of men. It was one way in which Eternal Providence worked out the elevation of the race, and laid the foundations of our modern civilisation. "Might was right;" and in a rough way this held good, the conqueror, as a general rule, being the superior in civilisation, and the promoter of a better order of things. These stout Normans, however, went about

their conquests after a fashion thoroughly orthodox. William the Conqueror obtained the sanction of Hildebrand, the reigning Pope, for the subjugation of England; and Henry II. was expressly authorised by a bull of Adrian, who was then on the papal throne, to conquer Ireland. "We, therefore," said the pontiff, "looking on your pious and laudable design with the grace which it deserves, and favourably assenting to your petition, do hold it good and acceptable that, for extending the borders of the Church, restraining the progress of vice, the correction of manners, the planting of virtue, and the increase of religion, you enter this island, and execute therein whatever shall pertain to the honour of God and the welfare of the land; and that the people of this land receive you honourably and reverence you as their lord: the rights of their churches still remaining sacred and inviolate; and saving to St Peter the annual pension of one penny for every house." Armed thus with the highest religious sanction of the age, the Norman knights leaped fearlessly on the shores of Ireland; and, no doubt, felt that they were doing a great and good work. Every schoolboy knows the circumstances in which the conquest of Ireland was effected: how a traitorous Irish prince, Dermot M'Murchad, king of Leinster, having been dethroned for certain misdemeanours, applied to the English king, Henry II., for assistance to recover his princi-

pality ; and how Strongbow, with his knights and retainers,—a mere handful,—landed in Ireland, and gradually beat down all opposition. The undisciplined and poorly-armed Irish had no more chance against the mailed and disciplined Norman ranks, than the Hindoos, when Clive subdued India, against the Anglo-Saxon battalions. Henry himself visited Ireland, but was prevented by domestic troubles from remaining to complete the conquest of the country. He merely appointed the King of Connaught as king of the whole island, under himself ; a district around Dublin, called “the Pale,” was placed under feudal law—the rest of the country being left under Brehon, or Irish law. A more wretched state of matters could hardly be imagined. These rapacious Norman knights, uncontrolled by the royal presence, aimed at winning immense possessions by their sword, and holding them for their private advantage. Engaged in ceaseless continental wars, the English monarchs could give little attention to Irish affairs, and governed the country by deputy. Desolating wars followed between the inhabitants of the Pale and the natives. National animosity, thus perpetuated, sustained the spirit of war, and war raged on with a fierceness which time did nothing to mitigate. Covetousness was added to the other baser passions ; and rapacity inflamed the anarchy in which it hoped for gain. Confiscation of land followed unsuccessful

insurrection ; and the victors revelled in the spoils of the wretches whom they slaughtered. Thus the miserable round continued till Elizabeth ascended the throne. Her reign, that brought so much glory and greatness to England, only deepened the darkness and misery of unhappy Ireland. In the very era when a new intellectual and moral life was pulsating among the nations, and beating with peculiar strength in the heart of England,—when Shakespeare was giving to the world those marvellous creations of genius and beauty, that embody the universal life of man, and Bacon was teaching the world philosophy, and Spenser filling the earth with the glorious music of his “*Faerie Queene*,” and Raleigh leading out new colonists,—the fairest isle of Europe lay bathed in blood, like a ghastly ruin in moonlight, devastated by hordes of the basest and most savage of mankind. During the whole of the great queen’s reign, frightful wars raged in Ireland. The oppression which makes wise men mad provoked resistance to the rulers whom she appointed ; and opposition was put down by the most inhuman methods. Crops were destroyed, dwelling-houses burned, the people slaughtered ; and then famine, on its dark wing, descended to destroy the remnant left by the sword. The poet Spenser, who witnessed the effect of the famine which followed these wars, declares that he saw the poor natives “*creeping out of the woods on their hands,*

for their legs would not bear them, crying like ghosts from their graves, eating dead carrion, water-cresses, and shamrocks, and at length scraping the very carcases out of their graves." Even the heart of Elizabeth was touched at length. "Alas! alas!" she cried, "I fear lest it be objected to us, as it was to Tiberius concerning the Dalmatian commotions—'You, you it is who are to blame, who have committed your flock not to shepherds, but to wolves.'" No improvement however followed—to wolves they were still committed.

James the First took comprehensive measures for the settlement of Ireland; and for this purpose introduced a large number of colonists from Scotland, and some from England, giving them the lands in Ulster that had been forfeited by rebellion. These Scotch settlers brought with them thrift, industry, and the Saxon aptitude for productive labour; and, in due time, developed into the vigorous and prosperous community now occupying the greater part of that province, whose capital is the handsome, progressive city of Belfast,—a noted centre of commerce and manufactures. The arrival of these Scotch colonists could hardly have been a welcome sight to the dispossessed natives; and, it is to be feared, many a rough encounter took place between the old possessors and the new claimants, resulting generally in pushing the former back into other regions, as the Red Indian

retires before the advancing backwoodsman. Many names of places throughout Ulster terminate in "bawn." Originally these were fortified houses or villages, which the colonists erected during their conflicts with the native Irish. It is useless, at this day, to go into the justice of these transactions. As in multitudes of instances where the sword has been the arbitrator, we must accept accomplished facts; and, as a general rule, the less we say about the moral aspect of these affairs, in which our ancestors were involved, the better.

Darker and more terrible scenes were witnessed in the years that followed. An oppressed and brutalised people rose in savage vengeance in 1641, and deeds were then perpetrated that make the blood run cold. Though massacre was not deliberately planned by the leaders in that rebellion, it is one of the saddest records that history has to make, that brutal, indiscriminate massacres were perpetrated by the natives when their furious passions were roused; and these were followed by retaliatory measures on the other side, of deplorable atrocity. It was a frightful scene when Protestant and Catholic were butchering one another, their blood swelling the common torrent, and the deadliest passions mingling in the strife. A period of strife and weltering confusion followed; and it was a relief almost when Cromwell, with his Ironsides, swooped down on the struggling factions, and,

by a few blows from his stern hand, terminated the long agony. Severity in such circumstances was, perhaps, the truest mercy. His measures seem to us merciless; yet they undoubtedly ended speedily a conflict which would otherwise have been protracted, and thus saved much bloodshed. The memory of Cromwell is green in Ireland still, though by no means revered; and to this day the very peasantry speak of him in terms which only extreme terror and hate could have inspired. How could we expect the Irish to think of the iron-handed Cromwell with patience, much less with gratitude? yet it is a fact that he gave the country what it had not enjoyed for centuries—the blessing of peace. His amiable and estimable son Henry governed Ireland for a short time as it had never been governed before; and had his dynasty occupied the throne, Ireland would have been made a part of the empire, not a trampled dependency. It is worth remembering, too, in connexion with Cromwell's Irish rule, that one of Ireland's most distinguished sons, John Philpot Curran, was a descendant, on the paternal side, of one of Cromwell's Ironsides; so that the man who so successfully pleaded the cause of Ireland in later days, who stood up for the weak against the strong, who was as magnanimous as he was incorruptible,—the advocate who, at his own peril, and with the courage of a hero, defended the sufferers of 1798 under the very

shadow of the scaffold,—the eloquent, witty Curran, had in his veins the blood of a Cromwellian Puritan soldier.

The limits of this lecture, now almost reached, prevent me from dwelling on the remaining events of Irish history. With that dread fatality that seems ever to have hung over her destiny, Ireland was involved in the contest that drove the Stuart family from the British throne; and, with her usual ill-fortune, she espoused the cause of that unhappy imbecile, James the Second—the weakest, if not the most worthless, of his faithless family. In reality, however, the Catholics of Ireland cared very little for the house of Stuart; but, true to the instincts of their race, they rallied round Tyrconnel, one of their chieftains. Protestant Ireland, with wiser choice, gathered to the standard of William of Orange; and now, once more, the island became two hostile camps, and its green valleys were sprinkled with the blood of its people. I need not dwell on the well-known issue of that conflict. The battle of the Boyne proved to be the Waterloo of Celtic Ireland; and the capitulation of Limerick closed the contest. This was the time when magnanimity and wisdom might have dictated a merciful and conciliatory policy; and the treaty of Limerick might have marked the close of Ireland's misery and the commencement of her prosperity. But when all the vile passions of faction,

fear, hatred, revenge, blind rage, were dominant, how could generosity or even justice be expected? The end of this war proved to be the commencement of another dreary era of suffering and national degradation for unhappy Ireland,—broken only by the Rebellion of 1798 and its atrocities, which, in some particulars, recall the horrors of 1641; and terminating in the awful famine of 1846. This era of woe was ushered in by the enactment of the Penal Laws—the shame and disgrace of Protestantism, for, in persecuting, Protestants violate their own fundamental principles. For eighty years Celtic Ireland groaned under this atrocious code. “Its memory,” says Goldwin Smith, “will still remain a reproach to human nature, and a terrible monument of the vileness into which nations may be led when their religion has been turned into hatred, and they have been taught that the indulgence of the most malignant passions of man is an acceptable offering to God. For it was a code of degradation and proscription not only religious and political, but social.” We may judge of the whole of these laws from one or two samples. By their enactments, Roman Catholics were prohibited from educating their children, at home or abroad; they were disabled from acquiring freehold property; they were excluded from all the liberal and influential professions; and deprived of the guardianship of their own children. If any son of a Catholic became a

when

Protestant, he could dispossess his father of the fee-simple of his estate, which became his at his father's death, as a reward for his conversion. These are only specimens of this code. In palliation of it, it can only be alleged, that persecution was the vice of the age, from which no party was free; and that the codes of France, Spain, and Austria contained laws even more sanguinary. It may also be alleged that the Roman Catholics, by their rising under James II., and by the proscription lists which they then drew up, provoked the stern measure of retaliation. One thing is certain,—that only at intervals were its enactments rigorously enforced. But its effects could not fail to be most disastrous. To deprive a people of the rights of citizens, the claims of property, and the means of education for their children and their clergy, was to crush all their energies, and doom them to despair. In the language of Burke, “to render men patient under deprivation of all the rights of human nature, everything which could give them a knowledge or feeling of those rights was rationally forbidden. To render humanity fit to be insulted, it was fit it should be degraded.” The working of this penal code was disastrous to the best interests of the Protestant religion which it professed to support. It was disastrous to the interests of England which it promised to maintain; for it drove the best of the Irish nation into

exile on the Continent, where they joined England's enemies, and, as at Fontenoy, turned their swords against Britain with terrible effect. It made Ireland the source of England's weakness, and ready to conspire with her enemies when peril arose. Above all, it was fruitful of disaster to the Irish people. Ground to the dust, their spirit broken, toiling without the hope of a future, they became pauperised and degraded ; clung with desperate tenacity to the patch of ground that yielded enough to sustain life, bidding enormous rents in their eager competition for land ; and, as the population became excessive, they snatched at the fatal gift of the potato, which, when it perished, buried millions of them in its grave. Meantime, Irish pauperism overflowed into the cities of England, swamping her labour-market, reducing the wages of her labourers, and pulling down her people to Irish hunger and Irish despair. Thus does retribution follow national as well as individual wrongdoing. The whole social framework of Ireland became disorganised. The gentry and landed proprietors themselves were involved in the general disaster. Their estates, encumbered by a starving, reckless tenantry, were impoverished. Mortgage was added to mortgage ; debt, ruin, drunkenness followed, and at length the Encumbered Estates Court took them in hand, and made an end of Irish squirearchy. No one mourns their departure. As landlords they were

greedy and merciless ; as masters, brutal, debauched, cruel, and tyrannical. They and their middlemen ground the unhappy tenantry to the dust, and drove them, maddened and brutalized, into Whiteboyism and agrarian outrage. The horrors of such a state of society can hardly be exaggerated. In 1729, when the population of Ireland was only a million and a half, Swift describes the swarms of beggars of the female sex, followed by ragged children, as crowding the roads and streets ; their offspring growing up thieves for want of work. The weary round went on for another century : an alien proprietary, indifferent to the condition of the cultivators of the soil, many of them absentees ; middlemen, rapacious and tyrannical ; no employment other than agriculture for a superabundant population ; a penal code under which the bulk of the people “ could neither buy land, nor take a mortgage, nor even fine down a lease ; ”—all these causes were at work destroying the national life ; and when, in 1834, a commission was appointed by the British Parliament to inquire into the condition of the Irish population, this is the ghastly picture they drew :—“ A great proportion of them (the agricultural labourers, who formed, it was estimated, two-thirds of the whole population) are insufficiently provided at any time with the commonest necessities of life. Their habitations are wretched hovels ; several of the family sleep together on straw, or on

the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes with not even so much to cover them. Their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. They sometimes get a little herring or a little milk, but they never get meat except at Christmas, Easter, and Shrovetide."

Late repentance is better than perpetual sin ; and though the most penitent remorse will not prevent the seeds of evil from springing up, yet in justice alone is national safety. England has at length been thoroughly awakened to the wrongs inflicted on Ireland ; and with earnestness and sincerity she has, for some time, been trying to right them. No doubt the process of dealing out justice has been slow, but it has advanced steadily, as the case was better understood. The year 1778 saw the worst articles of the penal code abolished. The year 1800 witnessed the consummation of the Union, by which Ireland became an integral part of the British empire ; but unhappily Catholic emancipation was withheld ; and, instead of being conceded gracefully, was wrung from Parliament by a fierce political agitation in 1829. A happier era has now commenced ; though the effect of misgovernment extending over centuries cannot be removed in a day. The seaman knows that the billows continue to roll for sometime after the storm

has spent its fury. Long years will be required to eradicate the evils from the disordered social system, and create a healthy state of public opinion. But now that all serious legislative grievances have been removed, there is a fair field for the operation of moral influences, and we may hope that a brighter day has at length dawned.

Under the new and improved order of things, Ireland has already made substantial progress. The noble system of national education, conceived in a thorough spirit of justice and instructed wisdom, is gradually working a beneficent change. For a higher culture, the Queen's Colleges secure an admirable provision. The civil service is now open to the youth of Ireland. A poor-law reminds the wealthy of their duties towards poverty. A Board of Works guides and assists industrial enterprise. The Encumbered Estates Court has liberated the enormous extent of land that was in pawn, and transferred it to solvent and enterprising hands. Emigration on an unprecedented scale is relieving the pressure of a superabundant population. Already, within twenty years, two millions of the Irish population have found happier homes in other lands; and, at this moment, the tide of emigration swells as high as ever. The drain may continue with advantage to those that remain, for many a year to come. During the last twenty years, while the population has

diminished by two and a half millions of persons, two millions of acres have been added to the arable land of Ireland; competition for land has sensibly slackened; and wages have increased from 25 to 80 per cent. Landed estates are getting broken up, and the number of proprietors consequently is increased. Three thousand estates were sold by the Encumbered Estates Court, among eight thousand purchasers, so that each estate was, on an average, divided into nearly three.* The number of farms above thirty acres in size has considerably increased; those under fifteen acres have greatly diminished in recent years. "A proprietary of caste, governed mainly by political and social views, is being changed for one of capital with whom mercantile ideas are paramount. Cultivation is passing from the hands of a pauper peasantry, without capacity or motive for improvement, into those of capitalist farmers amenable to the influences which usually govern this class of men."† All these changes indicate a better future for Ireland; and give the prospect of a fair adjustment of the relations of landlord and tenant, founded on a just division of profits, being yet secured. Still a vast amount of amelioration remains to be accomplished, when there are 40,000 holdings of less than an acre in extent, 85,469 holdings under five acres each, and 183,931 under fifteen acres each,

* *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1864.

† *Ibid.*

and when, over large districts, con-acre prevails, and extravagant rents swallow up all but the smallest margin of profit. Landed proprietors have yet but partially learned that their duties to their tenantry are not summed up in pocketing the rents.

On the whole, I think a nation that has survived so many misfortunes, and preserved its vitality under such a train of crushing calamities, so that to-day it is sending off swarm after swarm to other lands,—that has not lost its buoyancy, gaiety, or humour through all its gloomy past, must have a wonderful tenacity of existence, and no small amount of vital energy. A race that has produced, amid all their disadvantages, such men as Burke and Goldsmith, Flood, Grattan, Sheridan, Plunkett, Shiel, and O'Connell,—such writers as Moore, Lover, Davis, Maginn, Mangan, and M'Carthy, and such patriots as Wolf Tone and Emmet, must have sterling stuff in it, and a great future yet before it. What Ireland now wants are peace, capital, industry; or, as Sydney Smith puts it, “No more Erin-go-Braghs, but Erin-go bread and cheese, Erin-go cabins that will turn the rain, Erin-go breeks without holes in them.” If Irishmen would allow the past to be past, and cease all thoughts of avenging a cause that has long since passed before a divine tribunal, and for which no living man can be held accountable; if they would refuse to allow the recollection of these sad events, that once involved

all Europe in similar misfortunes, to influence the action of to-day; if, labouring unitedly for the common good, they would crown Irish brilliancy with Irish thrift and industry, then indeed Erin would become

“Great, glorious, and free,
First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea.”

LECTURE THE SEVENTH.

DR KANE'S ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.

IN all the records of human doing and daring, there are no nobler memorials of indomitable courage, of stern endurance, and of the might of the human will in conquering physical obstacles, than those furnished in the history of Arctic adventures. In point of interest, Dr Kane's narrative is among the very foremost of such records. It was drawn up by his own hand in 1856; and a few months after its completion that hand was still for ever, and that fiery spirit, whose very element was danger and adventure, "had gone over to the great majority"—had joined the mighty congregation of the departed. Whether it be that the story is told with such charming clearness and simplicity, or that the adventures passed through by Dr Kane and his companions are themselves possessed of such a thrilling character, certain it is that no nar-

rative of Arctic exploration we formerly possessed can be compared with this in profound interest and captivating power. Kane proved to be not only one of the most skilful and daring commanders, but also a historian of rare and graphic power; and hence his narrative is such as touches all hearts, and satisfies all minds. I propose to embody the substance of this narrative in the shape of a lecture, taking up the story from our own doors.

On the 18th of June 1853, most of those I address will remember that a little brig, bearing the name of the *Advance*, of one hundred and forty-four tons burden, entered the Narrows, and dropped anchor in our harbour.* She had sailed from New York; she was bound for the North Pole. It is not safe to judge things merely by externals. I, for one, remember surveying the *Advance* with much disappointment, and something like contempt, when informed that this rather heavy-looking little craft was going in search of Sir John Franklin, and was about to brave the dangers of the Polar Sea. When one thought of the many splendid and powerful vessels that had been equipped and sent out on the same destination, and were at that time battling their way through the ice-fields of the North, and then looked at this insignificant little brig, with a ship's crew of but eighteen men, you felt inclined

* St John's, Newfoundland.

to consider the enterprise sheer folly, and to put it to the account of American recklessness and self-confidence. Yet nothing could be farther from the truth. Braver hearts than those on board that little craft never beat in human bosoms; more cool and intrepid navigators never dared the treacherous deep. The undertaking originated in no spirit of wild or reckless daring, but had been prompted by the purest philanthropy, and entered on after the coolest scientific calculations. The fate of Sir John Franklin and his one hundred and forty-six companions, who seven years before this date had so mysteriously disappeared within the Polar Circle, had awakened the profoundest sympathies throughout the civilised world, and called forth the most strenuous endeavours for their discovery and rescue. Efforts extending over four years had, however, failed to discover a trace of the lost voyagers. Every accessible shore, bay, and inlet where success could be looked for, had been searched without any result. England had sent out, regardless of expense, expedition after expedition, guided by the boldest and most skilful navigators; and now despair was chilling the hearts of the most hopeful. Dr Kane was one of those who refused to believe that Franklin and his men were beyond the reach of human aid. After careful calculations he arrived at the conclusion that Franklin had made his way

into that mysterious region called the Polar Basin—an expanse of open water supposed to extend around the North Pole, and to be bounded on the south by that great belt of ice which girdles the globe around the Arctic Regions, and through which, therefore, a navigator must pass to reach the Polar Water. Here, Kane concluded, the long-sought navigators were shut in by the great ring of ice; and from the comparatively mild temperature of this unknown region, and the abundance of animal life, he conceived it quite possible that they might be still alive, and anxiously looking for help. Having arrived at this conclusion by careful calculations, the daring man said, “I will go after them into the unexplored waste of waters, and, God helping me, I will either restore them to the loving hearts that are pining for their return, or at all events lift the mysterious veil that now enshrouds their fate.” Mr Henry Grinnel, one of the generous merchant-princes of America, who had already despatched one expedition in search of Franklin, in which Dr Kane had acted as surgeon and naturalist, nobly placed the *Advance* at his disposal for a second search. The Government of the United States and some private individuals aided in procuring a proper outfit, and in supplying the instruments required for scientific observations. Hence it came about that the *Advance*, Dr Kane com-

mander, with seventeen volunteers under him, was on the 18th of June 1853 lying in our harbour, bound for the Polar Basin. Little did we then fancy that the handful of men on board this little brig were destined to achieve an enterprise that would make the civilised world familiar with their names, and would furnish such examples of cool intrepidity, perseverance, and heroic endurance in the cause of humanity, as would place their names high on the roll of fame, and cover their leader with imperishable renown.

The stay of the *Advance* here did not extend beyond two days; but it is a matter of honest pride for every Newfoundlander that our city obtains most honourable mention in Dr Kane's narrative. He says,—“The Governor, Mr Hamilton, a brother of the Secretary of the Admiralty, received us with a hearty English welcome; and all the officials, indeed all the inhabitants, vied with each other in efforts to advance our views. After two days, we left this thriving and hospitable city; and with a noble team of Newfoundland dogs on board, the gift of Governor Hamilton, headed our brig to the coast of Greenland.” Thus was Newfoundland destined to take a humble part in this great enterprise, being represented by her world-renowned dogs,—not, however, the aristocratic race that are in such high repute in England, but the hardy, rough, ungainly curs that haul our wood in

winter over the snow, making the night hideous sometimes with their howlings, and performing so much useful work as draught-animals, that they have some title to be ranked among "the bone and sinew of the country." We shall find that these strong-limbed, ravenous brutes proved most serviceable to Kane; indeed, without them, and some others obtained in Greenland, the expedition would have been a total failure. It was by travelling on sledges, drawn by some of these dogs, that two of Kane's party succeeded in getting a hasty peep at what they believed to be the open Polar Basin. Only one of our pack, named "Old Whitey," survived all the hardships of the expedition, and returned to be affectionately cherished by Kane till the day of his death.

The members of the Masonic body in St John's, finding that Dr Kane belonged to the wide-spread brotherhood, resolved on giving him a fraternal welcome; and at the entertainment to which they invited him and his officers, they presented him with a complimentary address, together with a masonic flag. This little flag he promised to plant on the North Pole, should he ever reach that mysterious locality; and it is an interesting circumstance that it was carried, as their banner of hope and faith, by the different excursion parties of the expedition; and on one occasion, as we shall find, it served to direct Kane to a party of his men who had lost their way,

were covered with snow-wreaths, and all but dead with cold and hunger. Thus the masonic symbol, in this case, as in many another instance, proved the means of preserving from death. In reply to the address of the Freemasons, Dr Kane said,—“To be thus received by brethren and Englishmen, and thus parted with on leaving this portion of the British territory, perhaps the last we may touch at on our way, is indeed most cheering to my spirit and encouraging to my hopes ; for the great cause in which I am embarked is one which involves the feeling of universal brotherhood, bound by no limits, and contracted by no sectarian views or national prejudices, for it springs from a sympathy that embraces the wide family of man, and extends its efforts to relieve, wherever suffering, distress, or want mark out a path for it to follow. Should it be our lot to pass a period of our time in the long night which in those regions succeeds the day, amid a frozen wilderness, in the deep solitude of darkness, so palpably dense as to be almost tangible, where over the wide waste of desolation unbroken silence reigns—still, even there, despondency will find no resting-place in our bosoms, but the cheering hope will animate them, that when the day shall again dawn upon us, a bright and glorious morrow will break forth, to be rendered brighter and more glorious still by the crowning of our hopes, and the

reward of all our anxieties and toils, in the recovery and restitution to society of England's nobly-enterprising son, *your* countryman, and mutually *our* brother." And so, with these brave words of cheer, "Brother Kane" bade his "brethren of the mystic tie" farewell. The incidents on which I have been dwelling are not recorded in Kane's Narrative; but the interest which I know attaches to them in the minds of some who hear me, and whose voices were the last to bid him God-speed and farewell, must be my apology for bringing up these reminiscences. Shortly after the departure of Kane, a letter was received by a gentleman of this city from Lady Franklin—that lady whose touching devotedness in the cause of rescuing her husband has won all hearts. In that letter, dated London, July 20, 1854, she said,—"It gives me great pleasure to learn that the philanthropic and generous enterprise of these noble Americans is so fully appreciated by my countrymen in Newfoundland, and especially by the members of that worshipful society who have deemed my beloved husband worthy to be considered as a brother. The cause in which these heroic citizens of the United States have embarked is indeed, to use the beautiful language of Dr Kane, 'one which involves the feeling of universal brotherhood;' and there is, perhaps, no one who can feel the truth of this truly Christian and

generous sentiment with such profound gratitude as,
your obedient and obliged servant,

“JANE FRANKLIN.”

Mr Grinnel, of New York, wrote to the same gentleman, saying,—“Dr Kane was highly pleased with the unexpected attentions bestowed upon him while at your port. Independent of the search for Sir John Franklin, I think the Doctor has a strong inclination to place his foot on the North Pole.” Never, surely, was the well-known hospitality of our city more worthily bestowed than in the present instance. Cheered by the reception they met with, the heroic band pointed their vessel's prow to the north, slowly glided past all the haunts of civilised men, disappeared within the ghastly wilderness of the Arctic Circle, and were heard of no more for two long and dreary years. What happened them in the interval I shall try to tell you. But, first, we must try to comprehend Kane's plan of operations and proposed method of reaching the Polar Basin.

He arrived at the conclusion, by reasoning from the analogies of physical geography, that Greenland was a vast peninsula stretching away to the far north, and probably touching the Polar Sea. He therefore determined to make Greenland itself the basis of his operations,—to force his vessel along its shores as far north as the ice would permit,—then, having secured

the brig in some creek or inlet, he proposed to send out travelling parties on sledges drawn by dogs, carrying with them light gutta-percha boats, and thus to explore the whole western coast, reach the extreme northern point of Greenland, embark there on the open water which he hoped to find, and so explore the unknown Polar Basin and arrive at the Pole. He promised himself great advantages from adopting this course. Sir Edward Parry had formerly attempted to reach the Pole by travelling over the ice due north from Spitzbergen ; but after most heroic efforts he was compelled to abandon the attempt, in consequence of finding that the ice over which he was travelling was drifting so rapidly toward the south, that it carried him in that direction more quickly than he could advance northward. Kane obviated this difficulty by taking the solid land for his line of advance, which was also the shortest route to the open sea ; and he calculated that the fan-like abutment of land on the north face of Greenland would check the equatorial icedrift. He also hoped to procure in this route a more abundant supply of animal food, and the friendly assistance of the Esquimaux, whose settlements had been found in a very high latitude.

On the 21st of June 1853, the last farewell was waved, and the *Advance* left our harbour. We shall make the first stage of the expedition from the time

of leaving St John's till the brig was placed in her winter harbour in Smith's Sound, on the coast of North Greenland,—quarters which she was destined never to leave. On the 1st of July, they arrived at Fiskernaes, a Danish settlement, in South Greenland. Here Kane engaged an Esquimaux hunter, named Hans Christian, a youth of nineteen, fat and good-natured, and so expert that he could spear a bird on the wing. He proved a valuable acquisition to the party, and, as we shall find, performed no unimportant part in the expedition, catering for the dogs, purveying for the table, and more than once saving their lives by bringing a seasonable supply of fresh meat. This fat youth, stolid and unimpressible though he seemed, had a soft place in his heart ; and when he accompanied Kane he left behind one of the gentler sex to whom his thoughts often turned. Cupid is quite as active apparently amid the snows of the North as the flowers of the South. After surmounting many dangers in company with Kane, and sharing all the hardships of the enterprise, poor Hans became home-sick and love-sick, when Arctic darkness was brooding over the vessel ; and at length, unable any longer to bear up, he took his rifle, bundled up his clothes, and came to say good-bye. The Doctor, however, took him in hand ; gave him a smart dose of Epsom salts, followed by other sharp persuasives of the same character ; and, as soon as he

became convalescent, promoted him to the high office of dog-harnesser, and made him companion of his ice travels. The treatment was for a time successful; but, as usual, love in the end won the day. If glory and Epsom salts made Hans forget his first love, another came in the way. An Esquimaux tribe visited Kane in his winter-quarters, and a damsel of the party assailed and won the tender heart of Hans. Medical treatment failed in this instance; in the hour of need Hans deserted the expedition; and when last seen was mounted on a sledge, with a handsome supply of walrus and seal flesh on one side, and on the other a maiden, fair in his eyes as the opening day, and plump as a seal. Some Arctic Gretna Green was no doubt their destination.

Passing slowly up the coast, Kane made purchases of dogs at the different settlements, and on the 24th of July arrived at Uppernavick, in North Greenland. After a stay here of two days, he again pushed forward, left behind the last human habitation on that dreary coast, and entered Melville Bay, where the real difficulties and dangers of Arctic navigation began. Instead of taking the usual inshore track, Kane boldly determined to double Melville Bay by an outside passage, and accordingly dashed into the midst of the ice-floes and floating bergs, hoping by this course to secure a much quicker though more hazardous passage to the north water. Now began

perils from ice, storm, and tempest, that might make the boldest quail. They had a slight foretaste of what was awaiting them in the following incident. Finding the ice rapidly closing on the brig, and fearing a besetment, they determined to fasten to an iceberg, and, after eight hours' heavy labour, succeeded in planting their ice-anchors in its sides, and found themselves beautifully sheltered under its jagged cliffs. A dangerous refuge it proved. Presently a strange, crackling noise was heard; fragments of the mass began to patter on the surface of the water, dotting it like the first drops of a summer shower. The quick eye of the commander saw what was coming; they had barely time to haul off when the whole face of the enormous mountain of ice was hurled into the sea, making the waves leap into the air, and crashing like the discharge of a park of artillery. A minute later in moving off, and the *Advance* would have been crushed like a nutshell. These icebergs, however, proved to be true friends, though occasionally rather treacherous. When the huge icefloes began to press upon the brig, and drift her away southward, Kane's plan was to fasten a line to a moving berg, which acted as a breakwater, and being borne by the wind and the deep-sea current steadily northward, while the loose icedriffs around were carried by the surface-current in the opposite direction, this curious tug-boat frequently

carried him far in the right direction. Battling his way steadily through this huge, drifting pack of ice, boring the floes at times with saw and chisel, beating backward and forward "like fish seeking an outlet from a glass jar," Kane at length cleared Melville Bay on the 3d August, and reached the North Water leading into Smith's Sound, the unknown field of his search, and the scene of his perilous adventures. On the 5th of August he passed the "Crimson Cliffs,"—so named by Sir John Ross, from the patches of red snow which can be seen at the distance of ten miles, the colour being produced by a small plant of red hue acting on the snow. In a fine run through open water, the *Advance* passed Hakluyt Point, a spire of gneiss shooting up six hundred feet above the water-level; and on the 6th of August they sighted Capes Alexander and Isabella, the headlands of Smith's Sound. And now the little brig is sweeping by cliffs fifteen hundred feet in height, some of the precipices being eight hundred feet at a single steep. "They have been," says Kane, "until now the Arctic Pillars of Hercules; and they look down on us as if they challenged our right to pass. Even the sailors are impressed as we move under their dark shadow." The *Advance* was now fairly inside Smith's Sound, and entering on a region where white man had never before ventured. Captain Inglefield alone had looked into Smith's Sound, but had not gone far beyond the

entrance. At Littleton Island, Kane buried a life-boat and a small stock of provisions, as something to fall back upon in case of extremity. Landing for this purpose, they were surprised to find traces of human habitations, and indications shewing that at one time it had been a rude Esquimaux settlement, abandoned perhaps fifty or a hundred years before, but still in excellent preservation. They found, in getting a site for their stores, the mortal remains of the former inhabitants,—a mournful sight, in the midst of the dreariest scene the eye ever rested on. “The Esquimaux have no mother-earth to receive their dead; but they seat them in the attitude of repose, the knees drawn close to the body, and enclose them in sacks of skins. The implements of the living man are then grouped around him; they are covered with a rude dome of stones, and a cairn is piled above. This simple cenotaph will remain intact for generation after generation. The Esquimaux never disturb a grave.” In these tombs the voyagers found some of the rude implements of the inhabitants, and, among the rest, a child’s toy-spear, buried most likely with the little form that in life had played with it. Doubtless this little one had been pressed lovingly to the warm breasts of the poor savage mother, who wept bitter tears as she laid the tiny spear, no longer needed now, by the side of her dead boy ere the cairn was piled over his remains. The little relic told, too,

that here, on this dreary spot, children had been sporting ; that even here life vindicated its claim to gladness ; and that the savage, in the wildest scenes of desolation, shares in the joys that are common to the human family. Men are allied by far more than they differ. The outward condition may be very unequal, while only a thin partition severs them ; for are not the same joys and sorrows substantially, surging through the breasts of all ? Are not all struggling with the same realities of existence, and looking up into the same dread mysteries ?

The *Advance* is now cutting her way up Smith's Sound, along the Greenland Coast, towards the Polar Sea. Soon the ice is seen moving down, in a fearful pack of the heaviest description, towards the little barque, as if incensed at her intrusion into these forbidden regions where the Frost King holds his court, and the Ice Giants take their wild revels. Speedily they are in the midst of it. Along the shore is a belt of ice forty yards in width and eighteen feet thick, clinging to precipitous rocks, 1200 feet high. On the other side is the drifting pack utterly impenetrable, with icebergs dashing backward and forward with the tides, and by their tremendous pressure heaping up the icefloes into hills sixty or seventy feet high. There is but one way to advance northward, and the gallant Kane does not hesitate to enter it. By the rise and fall of the tides the ice relaxes at times, so as to leave

a narrow, tortuous lane of water along the shore. Into this fearfully hazardous opening the brig is forced, and by main strength warped along its windings from one grounded lump of ice to another. It is the morning of the 20th of August. A breeze springs up from the south, freshens into a gale, and at last rises into a perfect hurricane. The ice drives more madly than any one had seen before. The bergs are careering wildly, dashing against one another, grinding the floes, or hurling them together in enormous masses. What will be the fate of our little brig in this wild uproar? Will the ice-pack, with its heaving masses, seventy feet in thickness, crush her to atoms against the shore, or shall two bergs meeting lock her in their icy embrace? She is moored by three stout hawsers to a friendly iceberg that is stranded: should they hold, all is well, but if they part, Heaven help her! The hurricane increases in fury, roaring like a lion as he bounds from his lair. Suddenly a sharp, twanging snap is heard—a six-inch hawser has parted; and their hope is in the other two. A moment more, and another shrill ring is heard above the shrieking of the storm—a second hawser has gone. But there is hope yet. A noble ten-inch Manilla cable still defies the angry blasts, and gallantly swings the brig in safety. Vain hope! With a snap that rings out far above the roarings of the blasts, and the moanings of the shrouds, it gives

way ; and in the smoke that follows the recoil of the cable, the brig is dragged out by the wild ice, and in a moment, is in the midst of a roaring torrent, seemingly hurrying to inevitable destruction. Alas for the brave men that are now battling for their lives with mountains of ice ! Still no cheek is blanched with unmanly fear—no exclamation of terror is heard ; calmly the orders are issued and obeyed. Desperate efforts are made to beat back, but all in vain ; and now, with double-reefed top-sail, they are drifting before the gale and rapidly closing with the piled-up masses of ice. One enormous hummock rears itself above the gunwale, smashes the bulwarks, and deposits half a ton of ice on the decks. The noble little ship trembles but never shrinks, battles with the waves like a mother for her child, and through all the wild adventure seems to have a charmed life. But a new and more terrible enemy comes in sight—a troop of icebergs right in the course of the vessel, that is drifting before the gale without any power to avoid them. Shall the brig get her deathblow here, or will the bergs furnish some providential nook of refuge from the storm ? Courage, brave hearts ! See, an opening between the towering icebergs and the piled-up floes ! Here is a little haven, enter and be safe ! The tempest-tost vessel enters ; the ice-walls shelter her from the blast ; she loses her headway, and is suddenly at rest. The poor mariners are

just beginning to breathe freely when, to their horror, they discover that the treacherous icebergs too are in motion, sweeping down rapidly on the heavy floes, and about to crush the helpless brig between them, as Naysmith's steam-hammer would smash a walnut. Nearer and nearer the huge jaws of ice are approaching each other: the bravest heart beats quick—the boldest pause. The crisis of their fate has come, when Kane sees a low, water-washed iceberg drifting from the southward, with sufficient momentum to render it independent of the wind. The happy thought strikes him to make use of it to tow his vessel out of the jaws of destruction. As it is sweeping past, an ice-anchor is planted in its sloping side—a line is attached—the *Advance* is harnessed to this white steed of the waters. Our gallant Kane must tell the rest:—"It was an anxious moment. Our noble tow-horse, whiter than the pale horse that seemed to be pursuing us, hauled us bravely on—the spray dashing over his windward flanks, and his forehead ploughing up the lesser ice, as if in scorn. The bergs encroached upon us as we advanced; our channel narrowed to a width of perhaps forty feet; we braced the yards to clear the impending icewalls. We passed clear, but it was a close shave. Never did heart-tried men acknowledge with more gratitude their merciful deliverance from a wretched death." Scarcely had the poor fellows breathed a

hurried thanksgiving, when they again found themselves among the ice; their vessel was repeatedly nipped; and at last a great ice-table, twenty feet thick, came upon them. No iron or wood could stand this; but the shoreward face of the berg happened to present an inclined plane descending deep into the water; "and up this the brig was driven, as if some great steam screw-power was forcing her into a dry dock." "At one time," says Kane, "I expected to see her carried bodily up its face, and tumbled over on her side. But one of those mysterious relaxations, which I have elsewhere called the pulses of the ice, lowered us quite gradually down again into the rubbish, and we were forced out of the line of pressure towards the shore." The brig now grounded in a place of safety, and after thirty-six hours of this fearful contention for life, the wearied Kane and his companions got repose.

By yoking the men to the brig, and working like horses in tracking and warping, Kane succeeded in making a little more progress to the northward; but after heroic efforts, they found it in vain to battle against the ice. It was the 23d of August, and already the winter had set in, the young ice, two inches thick, forming around the brig. They were at this time in latitude $78^{\circ} 41'$ —farther north than any of their predecessors, except Parry on his Spitzbergen foot-tramp towards the Pole. The brig was

now constantly grounding at low-water, and heeling over in a very unpleasant fashion. Kane resolved upon an expedition to discover a proper wintering spot, from which they could start on their winter travel, and enter on their search for Franklin. Accordingly, with seven of his best hands, he set out on a sledge. Onward they pushed for some time with tolerable success, till their way was blocked up by a glacier, whose steep sides terminated in the sea. With much difficulty they scrambled over this obstacle, and arrived at a large bay of open water, into which a tumultuous river, three quarters of a mile wide at its mouth, discharged its waters. Having forded this river, they advanced seven miles, and arrived at a cape which they named "Jefferson." Sixteen miles farther, they reached a headland which they named after the distinguished author of "The Newcomes," "Cape William Makepeace Thackeray,"—a graceful tribute to genius, in a high latitude. Why did they not name the next "Cape Charles Dickens," instead of "Cape Hawkes?" Kane mounted this headland, eleven hundred feet high, and had a magnificent view of an expanse extending beyond the eightieth parallel of latitude. On one hand was a huge wall of ice, to which he gave the appropriate name of "The Great Glacier of Humboldt;" and beyond it he named the land "Washington," the area between being a solid sea of ice. Having found no place so

well fitted for a winter harbour as that in which he had left the *Advance*, Kane now retraced his steps, and placed the brig in Rensselaer harbour, which he says "they were fated never to leave together—a long-resting place to her indeed, for the same ice is around her still."

It was now the 10th September, and no time was to be lost in making preparation for the long Arctic winter night that was rapidly approaching. In another month the sun would disappear, and for one hundred and forty days they would not see his face. Think of it!—twenty sunless weeks, with the moon only at times, and the occasional glimmerings of the aurora-borealis. No white men had ever previously wintered in such a high northern latitude, and careful preparation must be made for encountering an unknown degree of cold, and the long prevalence of darkness. Their first care was to remove the contents of the hold of the vessel to a storehouse erected on a small islet. Then a deck-house was constructed of boards—every attention being given to secure ventilation, warmth, dryness, room, and comfort. The washing, cooking, ice-melting arrangements were carefully attended to; and their domestic system was organised with special reference to cleanliness, cheerful recreation, and especially a fixed routine which was carefully adhered to. The Sabbath was observed with religious exactness. They had in view, how-

ever, not only to search these shores for traces of the lost expedition, but to advance the interests of science. Accordingly they set to work, dragged blocks of granite over the ice, and built an observatory, their mortar being frozen water and moss. Here they planted their transit instrument and theodolite. Magnetic observations in such a latitude being of vast consequence to the interests of science, they constructed another edifice in which no iron was allowed, even the fireplace being of copper; and here their magnetic implements were placed. In spite of all their attempts to render it comfortable, it proved to be an icehouse of the coldest description, where a fire, the heaviest buffalo robes, and the warmest furs could barely enable the shivering observer to keep magnetic watch. A third erection was necessary for meteorological observations, where their thermometers might be suspended far from all disturbing influences. A dog-house completed their arrangements; but the poor animals could not be kept away from their masters, and preferred hanging about the brig, and even sleeping on the snow, to being at a distance from them.

Things were now made pretty snug for winter. The evening shades were prevailing more and more—the gloom of the long, terrible Arctic night was gathering. Ere the sun disappeared, Kane determined to establish a chain of provision-depots along the northern

coast, so that when the travelling season arrived, they might be enabled to drive their dogs rapidly over the ice, unencumbered with a heavy load of provisions. Accordingly he despatched a party of seven men, with a considerable load of pemmican on a sledge, which they were to draw themselves, being harnessed to it by ropes and shoulder-belts. As the word "pemmican" will frequently be used in this address, it may be as well to explain what kind of food is referred to under this name. Sir John Richardson, in the account of his Arctic Searching Expedition, thus describes the mode of its preparation:—"A round of beef of the best quality having been cut into thin steaks, from which the fat and membranous parts are pared away, was dried in a malt-kiln over an oak fire until its moisture was entirely dissipated, and the fibre of the meat became friable. It was then ground in a malt-kiln, when it resembled finely-grated meat. Being next mixed with nearly an equal weight of melted beef-suet or lard, the preparation of plain pemmican was complete; but to render it more agreeable to the unaccustomed palate, a proportion of the best Zante currants was added to part of it, and part was sweetened with sugar. After the ingredients were well incorporated by stirring, they were transferred to tin canisters capable of containing 85 lb. each; and having been firmly rammed down, and allowed to contract further by cooling, the air was completely expelled and ex-

cluded by filling the canister to the brim with melted lard through a small hole left in the end, which was then covered with a piece of tin and soldered up." Yoked to a sledge loaded with this and other descriptions of food, Kane's men started on the 20th September, equipped with a buffalo robe to lie on, a canvas tent, and blanket bags to creep into at night. Their clothing was furs from head to foot, leaving only a portion of the face exposed. The party, in fact, resembled in appearance a number of bears that had been trained to waddle on their hinder-legs. They had fearful difficulties to encounter in this sledge-journey—at times wading through broken ice, crossing fissures, and dragging their heavy load among icebergs and hummocks, sustaining at the same time the fiercest cold, and getting only broken snatches of unrefreshing sleep. With unflinching resolution, however, they executed their commander's orders to the very letter. Advancing as far as latitude $79^{\circ} 50'$, they buried 800 lb. of provisions in a natural excavation among the cliffs, piling over them heavy rocks, brought with immense labour. Smaller stones were placed over these, and incorporated into one solid mass by a mixture of sand and water. They hoped by these arrangements to preserve them safe from the claws of the bears, whose powers in breaking up such provision depots is almost incredible.

The explorers are now snugly housed in for the

winter. The sun has disappeared ; a faint twilight, for a time, lingers at noonday. In the early part of November they can still read the thermometer at noon without a light ; “ and the black masses of the hills are plain for about five hours, with their glaring patches of snow ; but all the rest is darkness. Lanterns are always on the spar-deck, and the lard lamps never extinguished below. The stars of the sixth magnitude shine out at noonday.” The “ empress of the night,” then at her greatest northern declination, performs the whole of her stately circuit in the sky, as if to apologise for the absence of her more luminous partner. On the 12th December they have a grand incident in the great monotony of their life—an occultation of Orion, of which they obtain a satisfactory observation. On the 15th December, the last vestige of mid-day twilight is lost ; they cannot see print ; noonday and midnight are alike, and except a vague glimmer on the sky there is nothing to tell them that the Arctic world around has a sun. Fearfully depressing is this long and intense darkness. Even the dogs cannot stand it ; and when the men stumble upon them in the darkness, they put their cold noses to their hands, and commence the most exuberant antics of satisfaction. They howl at an accidental light as if it reminded them of the moon ; and the poor animals are allowed to see the lanterns frequently, as the best way of keeping up their spirits.

To the great grief of Kane, some of the best of the Newfoundland pack are seized with a strange form of brain disease, which, having at first the symptoms of epilepsy, became soon true lunacy. They bark frenziedly at nothing, walk automatically, howl as if pursued, and at length perish with symptoms of locked-jaw. In order to beguile the weary monotonous solitude, the crew try a fancy ball ; but in the absence of ladies, and with the thermometer 25° below zero, it proves rather a cold affair, but still breaks the dullness of the slow hours. An Arctic newspaper, with the appropriate name of *The Ice-Blink* was published on board ; the crew being both contributors and readers. After a time this print became rather dull, owing partly to the non-arrival of the mails, and partly to there being no opposition newspaper—no “miserable, venal, lying contemporary” to have a good stand-up fight with, and to exhibit as a stupid, irreclaimable scoundrel. There is, however, no idleness on board the little brig ; every man has his allotted task ; every hour its duty. One is carpentering, another tinkering, some sketching, writing, or projecting maps. Records of the weather, the tides, the thermometers, the ice, are each day carefully noted down. The most trying thing is to pass the whole twenty-four hours, on certain term-days, at the magnetic observatory, noting the movements of the needle. In the darkness, the observer whose turn

has arrived, stumbles to this building, with a lantern in one hand and an ice-pole in the other, sits down and, first of all, kindles his fire; then, with a chronometer in one hand and a pencil in the other, he has to note every six minutes the flutterings of the magnetometer. As the fire kindles, he finds the part of his body fronting the stove 94° above zero, and the opposite portion of his corporation 10° below zero. On the floor the temperature is 75° below freezing point; on a level with the head of the observer, as the warmth ascends, it is 20° above zero. Thus the unfortunate mortal has to remain on the watch, without winking, his turn of six hours, having all the while his feet at the Pole and his head in the Temperate Zone—his front in an English and his rear in a Spitzbergen climate. Yet no one shirks the duty; four hundred and eighty results are recorded each week. If you ask what is the use of all this martyrdom in the cause of science, let it be remembered that magnetism and the electric telegraph are intimately connected, and that it is by these painful and laborious efforts on the part of her votaries that science perfects her knowledge of terrestrial magnetism. The cold experienced by our voyagers during this dreary winter is the most intense on record. On the 17th of January the thermometers stand 49° below zero; on the 5th of February from 60° to 75° below zero—the fiercest cold ever experienced I believe. Fancy life going on

in an atmosphere 75° below zero, or 107° below the freezing point of water—enough surely to freeze the very marrow in the bones! Even after the return of the sun, the mean temperature for the whole of March was 41° below zero. In addition to their other sufferings, fuel began to fail. On the 11th March, Kane makes the following entry in his journal:—"Our fuel is limited to three bucketfuls of coal a-day, the temperature outside being 46° below zero. London brown stout and somebody's old brown sherry freeze in the cabin lockers. We have not a pound of fresh meat, and only a barrel of potatoes left. Not a man now, except Pierre and Morton, is exempt from scurvy: and as I look round upon the pale faces and haggard looks of my comrades, I feel that we are fighting the battle of life at disadvantage; and that an Arctic night and an Arctic day age a man more rapidly and harshly than a year anywhere else in all this weary world."

On the 21st February the sun made his appearance; and March brought back perpetual day. One can fancy with what feelings the voyagers, after 140 sunless days, welcomed back the cheering rays of the sun. Kane tells us, he climbed a crag to feast his eyes on the sight, nestled in the sunshine, and felt it like bathing in perfumed water. We know the value of our every-day mercies when they are withdrawn. The working-day had come; and now the thoughts

of the leader turned anxiously towards the great object of the expedition. Preparations were pushed forward for a thorough exploration of the immense untrodden coast that stretched away to the Polar Basin. Before entering on the track of these daring explorers, let us take a hasty survey of those frozen regions which have been the scenes of so many daring adventures ; and try to understand something of the grand purposes served, in the economy of nature, by the vast icy territories that stretch around the Pole.

By the North Polar Regions is meant that portion of the globe which lies within the North Polar Circle, comprehending the most northern portions of Europe, Asia, and America ; and by the North Polar Sea, or Arctic Ocean, is meant that expanse of water which divides the northern coasts of Europe and Asia from those of America. This ocean is of enormous extent, the circle which encloses it being no less than 7200 miles in circumference. On the Asiatic side of this sea are Nova Zembla and the New Siberian Islands ; on the European and American sides are Spitzbergen and Greenland ; and facing the American coast are Parry and Melville's Islands, King William's Island, and a number of others. The North Polar Ocean thus drains the northern slope of three continents, receiving the waters of an area of nearly 4,000,000 square miles. Now, this great Polar Sea has but

three avenues for entrance or exit—namely, Behring's Straits, the estuaries of Hudson's and Baffin's Bays, and the interval between Greenland and Norway, upon the Atlantic Ocean, known as the Greenland Sea. Thus, on one side this ocean communicates with the Pacific by Behring's Straits, and on the other side with the Atlantic. To discover a passage through it, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, has been the great problem of centuries; and, as is known to you all, it was solved a few years ago by the gallant M'Clure, though found to be impracticable for vessels, owing to the ice. Indeed, it is now certain that the lost navigator, Sir John Franklin, discovered another North-west Passage, further south, which at certain seasons may be practicable; though, as no one of his party survived to bear home the news of his great discovery, we only learn it by inference from the route he is known to have followed. It is estimated that a circle of 2000 miles diameter is occupied by frozen fields, and floes of vast extent. Here giant masses of fantastic form rear their heads,

“ Whose blocks of sapphire seem to mortal eye
Hewn from cerulean quarries in the sky,
With glacier battlements that crowd the spheres,
The slow creation of six thousand years.
Amidst immensity they tower sublime,
Winter's eternal palace built by time.”

We are not to fancy this region to be perpetually locked in the stillness of an icy death. The long

Arctic day relaxes the grasp of the frost, and the ice is broken up and floated away southerly to warmer regions. From October till May, these enormous fields of floating ice and the deeply-immersed bergs travel along the coast of Labrador, and approach the shores of Newfoundland, passing on till they are dissolved in the warm breath of the south. Did not the Arctic ice, in its great southerly march, approach our shores, Newfoundland would have no seal-fishery; so that in this island we are partly dependent on the regions of the Frost King for our bread. Away in his grim domains, the ice-meadows, on which the seals bring forth their young, are manufactured, and then floated down to us, through Baffin's and Hudson's Bay. But by what mysterious influence are they wafted with such regularity through the avenues of the Polar Sea, and borne away to the sunny south? Steadily these children of the Pole traverse the ocean, independent of wind and tide, seeking, apparently, a change of climate; but what unseen power propels them along and directs their march? The answer to this involves a reference to one of the most important discoveries of modern times, which has been beautifully expounded in Maury's "*Physical Geography of the Sea.*" From this admirable treatise we learn that the ocean has a vast circulating system, governed by fixed laws, and producing most important results. The great Gulf Stream, Maury appropriately names

“a river in the ocean ;” and he shews that, starting from the Gulf of Mexico, it crosses the Atlantic, washes the shores of Great Britain and Ireland, and raises the temperature of their climate, pursues its course through the North Sea, and finally discharges its warm waters into the Arctic Ocean ; thus elevating the temperature of the colder regions of the earth. But then, parallel with this stream of warm water pouring into the chilly regions of the north, a cold river, equal in extent, rushes from the Arctic Ocean towards the equator, floating on its bosom icefields and icebergs, and carrying them irresistibly to the overheated south, in order to produce there a grateful coolness. Thus are accomplished the beneficent designs of the Creator. This cold current from the north rushes along our shores in its southerly course, as we know to our cost. Were it not for this icy stream chilling our atmosphere, Newfoundland, from its latitude, would have a climate as warm as that of France ; or, did the Gulf Stream strike on our shores, we might be growing the vine. This Arctic river brings us, however, riches of another description. On its ice-covered surface, during March and April, our seal-hunters find their game ; and when the summer arrives, its cool waters, laving our shores, are the resort of the cod ; so that it creates for us a mine that can never be exhausted. It is remarkable that wherever this Arctic current touches, the most valu-

able species of fish are found ; while the fish of warm or tropical seas are comparatively worthless. We thus see that the Creator has arranged these great warming and cooling processes so as to balance one another, and equalise the temperature of the globe. It is also remarkable that, in leaving the Arctic Ocean, the cold stream is a surface-current ; while the warm stream setting in is an under-current, whose waters do not rise to the surface till some distance within the Polar Sea. The warmer climate of the Pole which is inferred to exist may, therefore, be caused by the waters of the Gulf Stream coming in as a deep-sea current, and rising to the top at a temperature several degrees above freezing point, and thus mitigating the intense cold of these regions. We shall find that Kane's observations go to sustain the theory of an open Polar Basin.

In this address, frequent reference has been made to icebergs ; and the natural history of these wanderers of the deep is highly interesting. There are two ways in which most icebergs are formed. By the first method the iceberg is a land formation, having its origin far up amid the Arctic mountains, where for ages it is slowly reared, pushed seaward, and, like a ship, at length launched in its destined element. The glacier is, in fact, the parent of the iceberg. But what is a glacier ? We must try to get some idea of those great ice-growths called

glaciers, which are to be found in so many different mountain regions, before we can understand the formation of an iceberg. In those regions of the earth where, either from a high latitude or mountainous elevation, perpetual winter reigns, the moisture of the atmosphere is deposited only in the form of snow, rain being unknown. When the sun's rays strike this mass of recently-fallen snow in its feathery state, it undergoes a partial superficial melting, and presents the appearance of partially-boiled sago. It is now said to be in a granulated state. If you were to ascend the Swiss Alps you would find the vast valleys which separate the mountain peaks converted into great plains by this granular snow. But how are the mountains to be relieved of their ever-increasing burdens? In this way chiefly: these basins between the mountain summits run off into narrow gorges, which pass by a gradual winding descent to the plains at the base of the mountain. These gorges receive the drainage of the snow-field above; the cold converts it into a solid mass of ice, which is named a glacier. But here is the wonderful thing—these ice-masses, which fill the mountain gorges, are found to be in motion, creeping slowly but surely down to the plain, at a rate varying from one to four feet per day. In fact, the glacier is a river of ice, conveying the moisture in this shape from the mountain-tops to the plains,

just as an ordinary river drains the surface of a country at a lower temperature. I cannot now pause to explain the cause of the glacier's motion. Professor Forbes's theory is that generally received. He regards these formations as viscous or semi-fluid masses, and holds that their motion is owing to the yielding and adjustment of their parts, under the influence of gravity. Whatever be the cause, certain it is that they are travelling downward steadily bearing with them rock-masses, often of enormous size, torn from the mountain-sides; and thus creeping along, tearing out the very bowels of the mountains and carrying them to the plains below, they deposit these immense fragments, mixed with earth, in the valleys, where the higher temperature melts the ice, and the muddy streams rush downwards, giving origin to rivers. Glaciers are thus gigantic mountain-levellers. In the Alps alone upwards of four hundred are at work,—irresistible navvies,—hurling these giant masses into the plains, where the rivers take up the particles and deposit them at the bottoms of seas, to build up new continents. These glaciers have been at work ever since the earth cooled sufficiently to allow of the formation of ice. The geologist finds traces of them everywhere, and in the formation of the globe they have played no unimportant part.

In the Arctic regions this great glacier action is

going on, wherever there is land suited to its operation. But there is this great difference between the Alpine and the Arctic glaciers,—after being pushed down the slope of the Alps, the glacier is melted in the warm valley ; but in the Arctic regions the glacier terminates in an ice-covered ocean, so that its masses cannot be thawed. They are accordingly hurled into the sea, and floated off, in the great southern drift, as icebergs. Far up in the icy gorges of those Arctic mountains, hundreds of miles from the coast, where human foot has never trod, the glacier is formed ; slowly it presses, with its giant forces, towards the sea, and lines its margin with an enormous crystal precipice. But the great propelling power behind forces the masses onward into the deep sea ; and now, in fearful throes, an iceberg is about to be born. Let us fancy ourselves present at the birth. A great cliff of ice overhangs the waves, whose tides have worn away its base, so that a slight cause will bring it down. Presently a noise louder than thunder is heard. The ice-mountain has snapped asunder—the detached mass comes grinding, crushing down ; the ice-giant leaps into the waves, that start back as if in terror at his approach, fling up clouds of spray, and madly toss themselves, as if in agony, high upon the shore. A ship four miles off feels the shock ; a boat, a mile or two distant, would be swallowed up or hurled ashore. The young ice-monster dives as he

touches the waves—rises slowly, the water streaming from his huge sides—he has received his baptism; he sways to and fro, tumbles repeatedly, but at last secures his balance. His front, ninety or a hundred feet high, rises above the surface of the waves, and to keep him steady there must be eight times as much underneath. He is now fairly launched in life; and as though disliking the cold region of his birth, he seeks the luxury of a warmer clime; but, like many a wild youth who turns his back on home, he is rushing on his own destruction. On his broad shoulders he bears over the waves many a huge rock and earth-bed, torn from the Arctic mountains, dropping them as the increasing heat relaxes his grasp, and lightening his burden as he gets further south. He is helping to lay, in the bed of the Atlantic, the foundations of new continents with rocks from the Pole. If we could examine the bottom of the sea about the banks of Newfoundland, we would find them strewn with mighty rock-fragments borne there by the icebergs from Greenland. When another continent or group of islands shall arise there, some future generation will quarry these boulders, employ them in the erection of churches or palaces, or hew them into monuments of the illustrious dead. Is not fact stranger than fiction? Do not the fairy tales of science far surpass all that imagination has dreamed of the wonderful? One of Kane's most interesting

discoveries was the Great Glacier of Humboldt, by far the most gigantic specimen known to exist. It extends for sixty miles along the Greenland coast ; presenting a perpendicular front of three hundred feet. How far it stretches into the interior is unknown. There it has been at work for ages, pushing forward its bergs into the sea. Kane, however, considers that for the most part it discharges its bergs slowly and quietly, propelling its masses step by step, year by year, until they reach water deep enough to float them ; and then they quietly rise from the waves, like Venus from the foam of ocean. He considers that the smaller bergs are broken violently off, and hurled into the waves ; but that the grander ones are quietly and gradually produced. The Humboldt Glacier, according to Kane's account, must be one of the most magnificent sights in the world. He considers Greenland, from its great extent, being one thousand two hundred miles in length, entitled to be called a continent ; and he calls this glacier "the mighty crystal bridge which connects the two continents of America and Greenland." "Imagine," he says, "the centre of such a continent, occupied through nearly its whole extent by a deep, unbroken sea of ice. Imagine this moving onward, like a great glacial river, seeking outlets at every valley, rolling icy cataracts into the Atlantic and Greenland Seas ; and having at last reached the northern limit of the

land that has borne it up, pouring out a mighty frozen torrent into unknown Arctic space."

The fact is, however, that the whole of Greenland may be regarded as a huge glacier. It is now in the same condition that the British Isles and parts of Europe were ages ago, during the glacial period. This vast country is swathed in an icy mantle, which is ever receiving fresh accumulations from atmospheric precipitations, and is thus continually pressing downward to the sea; and its seaward edges, broken off, and floated away, form the ice-fields and icebergs that cover the bosom of the North Atlantic in certain latitudes. Thus a huge ice-sheet is grinding down the Greenland continent into the bottom of the ocean. The striated rock-surfaces of Britain shew that, at one time, it was wrapped in a similar sheet of ice, and must have been worn down, by glacier action, just as Greenland is at this moment.

The portion of an iceberg that rises above the surface of the sea is but one-ninth part of its whole mass. It is very common to encounter bergs towering one hundred feet above the waves, so that their lowest peak must be eight hundred feet underneath the surface. But some monsters have been met with rising three hundred feet over the sea; their entire mass therefore, from base to summit, must be two thousand seven hundred feet. Fancy a mountain like Skiddaw, torn up by the roots and floating in the waters, sailing

from the gloomy portals of the Arctic Ocean, defying wind and wave as it proudly careers along, the sun's rays reflected from its crystal battlements and emerald caves. The warm breath of the South loosens its peaks and crags as it advances, and with a sullen plunge they drop into the waves. The submarine portion is dissolved, the berg becomes top-heavy, and reels over with an appalling noise. Shrouded in a mist of its own creation, it moves along, rivulets trickling from its sides, and at length disappears, "like the baseless fabric of a vision." Such is a history of the more imposing class of icebergs. But a smaller description are formed by the freezing of the water of the ocean in high northern latitudes. Sheet after sheet of ice is formed in the intense cold of those regions; immense snowdrifts add to the mass, till it reaches a height of thirty or forty feet. When summer comes, these ice-fields are broken up, and their drifting masses are the low flat icebergs, the terror of navigators.

It is quite time that we were looking after the fortunes of Kane and his companions. The Arctic day having dawned, they began preparations for their northern journey. On the 19th March 1854, Kane despatched an advance-party to deposit a relief-cargo of provisions, at the distance of ten days' journey from the brig. The party, consisting of eight, started in good spirits, with three cheers for their commander.

"I gave them," says Kane, "the whole of my brother's great wedding-cake, and my last two bottles of port ; and they pulled the sledge they were harnessed to famously." This proved one of the most disastrous journeys they undertook ; and the account of it is certainly one of the most harrowing tales of human suffering, courage, and endurance on record. Eleven days after their departure, Kane and his companions are cheerily at work in the cabin. Suddenly footsteps are heard on the deck above ; presently three of the party that had started so hopefully eleven days before, stagger in, swollen, haggard, almost unable to speak, and in the last stage of exhaustion from cold, fatigue, and hunger. With difficulty Kane gathers from them that five of their companions had broken down, and were lying somewhere on the ice, at a great distance, frozen and disabled ; and that, at the risk of their lives, they had come on to bring the news and send back help. They further informed him that, when they parted with them, the snow was drifting heavily around them. Such is their tale ; but the difficulty is where to find the sufferers, for the men who have returned only know that it is a spot to the north and east, within an area of forty miles. But Kane does not hesitate a moment—his poor friends are perishing miserably among the snow-drifts—he will to the rescue. A sledge is quickly prepared—nine of them start and press on, putting their trust in Him who

has already brought them through so many dangers. The wind rises and impedes their march ; but to halt in such a temperature is certain death. They are parched with thirst, but dare not stop to melt ice ; and the snow, put in the mouth, burns like caustic, and leaves the lips covered with blood. Two men of iron, who had never failed in any march, M'Garry and Bonsall, begin to breathe short, and shake with trembling fits ; and Kane twice faints on the snow. They are now out on this dreary search for eighteen hours without halting, or tasting food or water, and as yet have met no traces of their friends. Hope still flutters faintly ; but they begin to feel that an hour or two longer, and they must drop exhausted. But, hark ! a cry of joy—Hans, the Esquimaux, has discovered the track of a sledge almost obliterated by the drift ! With hearts beating anxiously they follow it up—footprints are discernible ; and at last a little masonic banner—the parting gift of the St John's Brotherhood—is seen fluttering from a tent-pole, hardly above the snow. The little tent itself is all but covered. Kane is requested to enter first alone. The burst of welcome and gladness from the poor sufferers who are still alive—the touching words, “We expected you, we knew you would come,” are too much for Kane, and the brave man is almost overcome. Their march has been one of twenty-one hours, without halt or refreshment ; but the most

appalling prospect is yet before them. The difficulty now is to get back to the brig, exhausted as they are, dragging their helpless, disabled companions, in a temperature of 75° below freezing point. After a few hours given to sleep and refreshment, they wrap their helpless companions carefully and tenderly in buffalo-robcs and furs, place them on the sledge, their fingers being fearfully frost-bitten in the operation ; and now, looking up to Heaven, they breathe a prayer for help, and commence their weary march. Slowly the sledge with its heavy burden creeps forward, at the rate of a mile an hour. At length they are within nine miles of a tent which they had left standing on their outward-bound march ; but their strength is failing rapidly. The fatal craving for sleep which intense cold produces shews itself ; two of the stoutest implore permission to sleep ; Hans, the Esquimaux, too, succumbs, and is found insensible under a drift ; another stands bolt upright with his eyes closed, unable to speak ; a fourth flings himself on the snow, and refuses to rise. In vain does Kane argue, reprimand, jeer, and even wrestle and box his men. The tent must be pitched ; their hands are too benumbed to strike a light ; neither food nor fire can be had ; even the whisky is found frozen under the men's furs. The sick and exhausted are crowded into the tent ; M'Garry is placed in charge, with orders to come on after four

hours' rest ; and Kane, with a single companion, starts to reach the half-way tent, where some provisions were, in order, if possible, to have some food thawed on the arrival of the dying men. It is a fearfully perilous walk for Kane : he and his companion stagger on, drunk with the cold, in a kind of half-conscious stupor ; manage the nine miles in four hours ; find their tent overturned by a bear ; erect it ; crawl into their reindeer sleeping-bags, and sleep intensely for three hours. Kane awakes, and finds his long beard frozen to his buffalo-robe, and Godfrey has to cut him out with his jack-knife. They manage to get some water and soup ready for their companions, who arrive and enjoy the entertainment as only famished men can ; and now, with fresh courage, they start once more. The most fearful part of the journey is yet before them—a great chain of bergs and hummocks, like gigantic tombstones, has to be crossed. Nature can hold out no longer ; the men begin to lose their self-control, eat snow, and become speechless. They are all more or less delirious ; take no note of anything around them ; and steer for the brig by pure instinct. Kane is the soundest of the party, and hits on the plan of letting the rest sleep in turn, three minutes at once, on the runners of the sledge,—an arrangement that proved very serviceable. Thus staggering like drunken men, they at length totter to

the brig, recognising no one; their persons covered with snow; their beards a mass of ice; and in this plight roll into bed and sink into a deathlike slumber. When they awake they are in a raving delirium; and for two days the ship presents the appearance of a madhouse, where there were only maniacs and frozen cripples, with but one sound man, Dr Hayes, to wait upon them all. The rescue-party had been out seventy-two hours, or three whole days; had halted but eight hours; got water but twice; and dragged a heavily-loaded sledge about ninety miles. One cannot conceive of human courage and endurance going beyond this, when we consider that the mean temperature all the time was 41° below zero. For a week nearly all were confined to sick-beds; some amputations had to be performed; and several had alarming symptoms of locked-jaw. Ultimately two died from the effects of the exposure; the others recovered. Very touching is Kane's account of the burial of Baker, the first who died. "We placed him," he writes, "in his coffin, and forming a rude but heartfelt procession, we bore him to the observatory, and deposited his corpse on the pedestals which had served to support our transit instrument and theodolite. We read the service for the burial of the dead, sprinkled over him *snow* for *dust*, and repeated the Lord's Prayer; then icing up the opening in the

walls we had made to admit the coffin, left him in his narrow house." Another corpse was soon after placed in the same lonely resting-place.

Before the party had quite recovered, Kane was one morning startled with the report, "People hallooing ashore." Going on deck, he beheld a number of wild, uncouth figures, evidently not bears, standing on the ice-hillocks around the harbour, vociferating and gesticulating violently. They proved to be a tribe of Esquimaux from a settlement further south; and were quite pacific and inclined to be friendly. Kane treated them with the utmost hospitality; and in return for cask-staves, beads, and needles, they gave him walrus-meat, and four fine dogs. They had, however, one unpleasant peculiarity—they were incorrigible thieves; and, so far from feeling ashamed of stealing, when caught in the act, the rascals burst into a roar of laughter, and treated the whole thing as an exquisite joke.

Passing over other incidents, we must now come to the final expedition for the exploration of the far North, and the discovery of the open Polar Sea. Kane's plan was to send out a party of four, (he was himself too weak to attempt the formidable journey,) with orders that two of them were to husband their strength till they arrived at the Humboldt Glacier; these were then to start on a dog-sledge, and push for the north, leaving the others to return to the brig.

On arriving at the farthest of their provision depots, they were mortified to find that the bears had appropriated the whole, having eaten the very flag that marked the spot. Arriving at the glacier, they tried to scale it, but in vain. Two of the party then returned to the brig; while Morton, with Hans, the Esquimaux, started on the ice parallel to the glacier, and drove away northward. After three days' travel amid the usual obstacles, they found themselves abreast of the termination of the Great Glacier. They then pushed on for an opening seen to the westward of a cape. This opening proved to be a channel. To their surprise, they now found the ice beneath weak and rotten, and so unsafe that the dogs began to tremble and refused to move. They were then compelled to leave the ice and take to the shore. To their unutterable amazement, when they advanced two miles they sighted open water, and observed birds flying about in great numbers. After turning the cape, which Kane named "Cape Andrew Jackson," they travelled fifty miles up this channel of open water, the water being actually black with dove-kies, and the rocks crowded with birds. The wind was blowing strong from the north, yet no ice was borne down. The channel appeared to be about thirty-five miles in width. At length they arrived at a cape where the land-ice, on which they had travelled hitherto, terminated; and an open sea, with a current

running five knots an hour, broke against the cliffs. Vainly did they try to pass round this cape: perpendicular cliffs, two thousand feet high, prevented them advancing. Morton ascended a knob, five hundred feet high, and saw before him an open iceless sea, as far as the eye could reach. Here, on the highest northern land on the globe, nearer the Pole than any human being is known to have reached before, Morton planted the Grinnel flag, and side by side with it our own Masonic banner. From this elevation Morton observed a peak, apparently about three thousand feet in height, which, being the most remote northern land yet known, Kane named after Sir Edward Parry, the great pioneer of Arctic travel. The cape he named "Constitution Cape," modestly declining the honour of giving it his own name, as Morton wished. This, then, was the termination of the journey, and of the northern search of the expedition. The country round, Kane named Grinnel Land, in honour of his patron; and the mountains, the Victoria and Albert Range.

It is impossible to contemplate this grand discovery but with the deepest interest. What were these lonely waters on which the eyes of these two daring men alone were destined to gaze? Were they a part of the great unexplored Arctic Basin—the long-dreamed-of open Polar Sea? It is difficult to avoid answering this question in the affirmative ;

and though the search was not so complete as to furnish absolute certainty, all the probabilities of the case seem to be in favour of such a conclusion. The open sea followed for fifty miles, then viewed from an elevation of five hundred feet, and found perfectly free from ice, vegetation advancing, animal life abundant,—all these indicate not a mere local opening in the ice, but a great iceless sea stretching towards the Pole. Thus theory is borne out by facts; and these seem to point to the conclusion that at least at certain seasons, if not always, an open iceless sea exists around the Pole. The warm waters of the Gulf Stream discharge themselves into the space around the Pole and elevate the temperature. How deeply we must regret that the explorers had to turn back at Cape Constitution! On their return to the brig, had Kane been in a condition to send out a thoroughly-equipped party, carrying with them their light india-rubber boats, so that they could have explored this open sea, more important results might have been secured. But, alas! their strength was unequal to such an undertaking; and their poor stock of supplies was now very low. We can sympathise with Kane when he says, “There was not a man among us who did not long for the means of embarking on its bright and lonely waters.” Had he been sufficiently stocked with necessaries when starting, or had the bears been less ravenous, the daring little man would doubtless

have reached the Pole. Now that the existence of such a sea is rendered highly probable, the Anglo-Saxon, having already wrung the secret of the North-West Passage from the lips of the Frost King, will never rest till he has planted his foot on the Pole, or found some good reason for leaving that locality unexplored.

We must now pass over a great deal that is interesting in Kane's narrative. The month of August 1854 was now upon them ; the brief Arctic summer was closing. Wearily and anxiously had they watched the effect of the sun's rays upon the ice, hoping that their prison-doors would be opened, and that their ship would be released. All in vain ; their grim jailer held them fast. By the 23d August the last faint hope of the ship being released for that year had vanished. The dreary prospect of passing another winter in the cold and darkness of an Arctic night, was now before them ; but it was far more appalling than the first. Their resources were utterly inadequate to another encounter with the raging cold, whose fearful power they had already experienced. They were a set of scurvy-stricken, broken-down men ; their coal was exhausted, and little wood could be had ; their stock of fresh provisions was gone, and only the chances of the hunt to rely on. Looking these difficulties firmly in the face, Kane and his men set about preparations to brave a second winter.

“ It was my first definite resolve,” he says, “ that come what might, our organisation and its routine of observances should be adhered to strictly. The arrangement of hours, the distribution and details of study, the religious exercises, the ceremonials of the table, the fires, the lights, the watch, even the labours of the observatory, and the notations of the tides and sky, nothing should be omitted that had contributed to make up the day.” The resources of the party being very low, especially in regard to fuel, Kane formed another wise resolution—to imitate the dress, diet, and dwellings of the Esquimaux as nearly as civilised man could do so; for he saw that these men, inured to all the hardships of Arctic life, had instinctively adopted the best mode of combating the difficulties of their situation. Accordingly he fitted up a small apartment on board the brig, measuring twenty-eight feet by eighteen, and a little more than six feet high, on the model of an Esquimaux hut. He surrounded the walls with a casing of moss and turf cut from the frozen cliff; the deck above was thickly covered with a similar envelope; and the floor with oakum. This little burrow was to be kitchen, dining-room, and bed-room for the whole party. Heat was to be maintained partly by lamps fed with seal-oil or pork-fat, and partly by a stove sparingly fed with wood obtained by ripping off all the extra planking of the vessel. The entrance to this frost-proof cellar was formed on

an Esquimaux model, being a sloping tunnel, twelve feet in length, three feet high, and two and a half feet in breadth, along which they must creep on all fours to pass to and from the deck.

Having completed their winter abode, the next care was to secure a stock of fresh provisions before the darkness drew its gloomy mantle around them. They joined the Esquimaux in their hunting parties, and shared in the produce of the chase according to the established law of the savages. A most cordial understanding existed between the pale faces and these children of the snow; and the Esquimaux soon learned to look on the white men as benefactors, and to respect them as their equals in physical endurance, and their superiors in the resources which civilisation had taught. Under date September 16th Kane wrote, "Back last night from a walrus hunt. I brought in the spoil with my dogs. Five nights camping out in the snow, with hard working days between, made me ache a little in the joints, but, strange to say, I feel better than when I left the vessel. The climate exacts heavy feeding, but it invites to muscular energy." "Sunday, Sept. 17th.—All hands rested after a heavy week's work. Just as we were finishing our chapter this morning in the Book of Ruth, M'Gary and Morton came in triumphantly, pretty well worn down by their fifty miles' travel, but with good news and a flipper of walrus that must

weigh some forty pounds. Our table-talk at supper was as merry as a marriage bell. One party is just in from a seventy-four miles' trip with the dogs; another from a foot journey of one hundred and sixty miles, with five nights on the floe. Each has his story to tell." Our friends keep a good heart with all their gloomy prospects; and at times their miserable burrow rings with the heartiest laughter. Even Hans, the Esquimaux, contributes his share of the fun, and has an eye for the ludicrous. On one occasion, after a successful hunt, a party of Esquimaux sat down to dinner, the joint being forty pounds of raw walrus-flesh. Hans, who had been present at the hunt, and shared in the feast, was much struck with their trencher-performances, and described it very graphically to his commander. "Why, Cappen Ken, sir, even the children ate all night. You know the little two-year-old, the one that bit you when you tickled it?" "Yes." "Well, Cappen Ken, sir, that baby cut for herself with a knife made out of an iron hoop, and so heavy that it could hardly lift it, and cut and ate, and ate and cut, so long as I looked at it." "Well, Hans, try now and think, for I want an accurate answer,—how much as to weight or quantity should you say that two-year-old child ate?" Hans is an exact and truthful man. He pondered a little, and said that he could not answer my question. "But I know this, sir, that it ate a lump as large as

its own head ; and three hours afterwards, when I went to bed, she was cutting off another lump, and eating still." It would appear from this account that Esquimaux children are favoured with exceedingly sharp appetites ; and it must be a serious matter when papa has a number of such mouths to fill.

Once more, then, the voyagers were plunged in the blackness of an Arctic night. In December scurvy broke out among them with renewed virulence, owing to the want of fresh meat. In their straits for fresh animal food to resist the attacks of the sailor's dreaded enemy, they had recourse to expedients that would seem very disgusting to our more squeamish stomachs. Every part of an animal, skin, claws, intestines, were turned to account in some shape or other. Finding one day a muscle adhering to an old bear's head that he was keeping as a specimen, Kane gave a luxurious raw meal from it to one of his scurvy-stricken men. The most adventurous of all, in his plundering for fresh meat, was Kane himself. The brig was swarming with rats, whose impudence was becoming insufferable. Here, thought the commander, is fresh beef in abundance. He tells us that he made a capital soup from a number of them ; and when going out to hunt, chopped a few and rolled them in tallow. His men, however, could not be persuaded to taste this luxury. The whole of them, however, relished intensely raw meat, and found it

much better in this state than when cooked for resisting the scurvy. Raw blubber, used as we do butter, along with walrus beef or liver in alternate layers, was pronounced by all delicious. Kane declares that for sustaining the animal heat, and as an antiscorbutic, raw meat has no rival. One of the main uses of food is to sustain the animal heat—food being to the body what fuel is to the fire. We are a kind of portable stoves, and the colder the atmosphere in which we are immersed, the greater the demand for food ; or, in other words, for fuel to generate the heat that is rapidly given off. Now, certain kinds of food generate more heat than others. Animal food is much more heat-creating than vegetable; and the fatter the animal food, the better for warmth. When raw, it seems to be best of all. Hence instinct leads men, when they are fighting with the Arctic cold, to eat seal-fat, bear and walrus flesh, in huge quantities, and to wash down their meals with oil. When the cold is very intense, raw flesh and blubber are indispensable to replace the waste. This is the teaching of nature, and we have no right to permit our miserable squeamishness and drawing-room refinements to find fault with this.

The low state to which the inmates of the *Advance* were now reduced, may be judged of by the fact that only three of them were able to do any work ; and with the utmost economy, they found that their wood

would only last till the end of January. On the 5th December, Kane mentions that he grated down two potatoes for two of his worst patients, and that he had only twelve left. "They were now three years old," he adds, "poor old frozen memorials of the dear land they grew in. They are worth more than their weight in gold." Christmas-day was observed with as much festivity as their means would admit. Their sole dish was pork and beans ; but they passed it round merrily, calling it by the endeared names of roast turkey, roast beef, onions and potatoes ; then, by way of desert, they had another allowance of pork and beans browned, and this was transformed into plum-pudding and custard. The health of absent friends was drunk in the eighteenth part of a bottle of wine—all they had left. The Esquimaux had moved further south ; and to get a supply of meat for his perishing men, Kane ventured out in the darkness to reach them, the distance being seventy miles. Heroic efforts were in vain ; he was driven back, and so ended the year 1854.

Drearily the thirty-one days of January crept along, with our poor diseased, hunger-bitten band. The sick grew worse ; the hunt yielded nothing ; for fuel, they were using their tar-laid hawsers. On the 4th of February only Kane and another man were able to move about. The spirit and courage of the commander never gave in, while men with far more physical

strength were prostrated. We may learn the value of religion, as a sustaining power in such trying circumstances, by the following extract from Kane's journal: "A trust based on experience as well as on promises, buoyed me up at the worst of times. Call it fatalism, as you ignorantly may, there is that in the story of every eventful life which teaches the inefficiency of human means, and the present control of a Supreme Agency. See how often relief has come at the moment of extremity, in forms strangely unsought, almost at the time unwelcome; see, still more, how the back has been strengthened to its increasing burden, and the heart cheered by some conscious influence of an unseen Power!" These were no mere words, but felt realities on the part of Kane, to which his heroic life was a testimony.

Wearily February drew to a close. So nearly were they perishing, that "the sickness of a single additional man would have left them without a fire;" and then it must have been soon all over with them. Early in March, Hans succeeded in reaching the Esquimaux settlement at Etah Bay, which Kane had vainly attempted; and he returned with a small supply of fresh walrus-meat. From this time their circumstances began slowly to improve; the hunt became more productive; the sun had returned, and the poor waxen-faced invalids crawled up to bask in his rays. Some of them had not been on deck for five months.

We must now hurry over the closing scene—the escape of Kane and his companions. Finding that nothing more could be done to secure the great objects for which they had set out, and despairing of a release for the vessel, the commander now formed the resolution of abandoning her, and of attempting to reach the nearest Danish settlement in South Greenland. The undertaking was enough to appal the stoutest heart. Thirteen hundred miles of ice and water lay between them and the nearest settlement of civilised man; and of these, eighty miles consisted of unbroken ice. They had three small boats so shattered as to be unseaworthy; a scanty stock of sea-biscuit, pork, and beans; they numbered seventeen individuals, of whom four were still invalids unable to move from their beds; and these must be transported by thirteen broken-down men who had gone through the sickness and hardships of a second Arctic night. The only possible means of escape was by the combined use of sledges and boats. Provisions were stowed away in the most portable form, the three rickety boats were patched up and strengthened in every possible way; covered with a housing of canvas, and then mounted on sledges. Then these were to be dragged over the ice by the men, with straps which passed over the shoulder and were attached by a long trace to the sledge.

It was a solemn and touching sight to witness these

brave men taking their last farewell of the brig, with which so many memories were associated. It is the 17th May 1855 ; all hands are gathered into the now dismantled winter-chamber. Prayers and a chapter of the Bible are read. In such an hour the bravest heart turns to a Father in Heaven. Kane briefly but touchingly addresses his companions, exhorting them to courage and subordination, and reminding them how often an unseen Power had rescued them from danger, and admonishing them to place reliance on Him who could not change. They take a last look at the brig, yoke themselves to the sledges, and slowly and painfully move off. There are no cheers—their hearts are too full for that. In the march, morning and evening prayers are never omitted. It is a touching sight to behold the forlorn band, at the commencement and close of each day's toil, gathering round in a circle, and standing with uncovered heads, while with full hearts they offer up a prayer that concludes with the words, "accept of our gratitude, and restore us to our homes."

Very slowly the weary caravan moves over the ice. At the expiration of eight days they have advanced but fifteen miles. Some of them, with scurvy and swollen limbs, can scarcely keep their place at the ropes. But now the genius of the commander shines out more resplendent than ever. He is constantly on the road with his sledge and dogs, bringing up fresh provisions,

baking batches of loaves in the deserted brig, and driving with them to his fainting men, carrying down the sick, and cheering the hearts of all. Nothing seems to deter or weary him. The kindly Esquimaux lend their dogs, and send provisions. On the 16th of June, a month after starting, open water is reached. The weary men, dragging their burden through ice-hummocks and snow-drifts, hail it as the Ten Thousand Greeks greeted the sight of the sea. The whole tribe of the friendly Esquimaux come to say good-bye. Some of them weep at the parting—all are touched. They load the voyagers with fresh provisions in the shape of birds. Nothing is stolen now. "We are friends, they say—we are not hungry—we will not take—we want to help you." Kane gives them all some parting gift. His dogs go to the community; all but faithful old Newfoundland "Whitey," and another that he could not part with.

And now with three cheers for Henry Grinnel, and homeward bound, the boats are launched. How the memories of "home, sweet home," are thrilling those weary hearts! Hope burns brighter. Visions of the dear land they left—of the welcome awaiting them—of the bright eyes that will look brighter when they come—float before them. But stern difficulties and frightful dangers yet lie before them. Storms arise—one of the boats is swamped—provisions fail—strength declines—but again and again providential relief

comes. Through twelve hundred miles of broken ice and water they plough their weary way. At length they are all but fainting with hunger, when they sight a seal asleep on a piece of ice. With trembling anxiety the rifle is pointed—the shot tells—the seal relaxes his long length, and with a ravenous yell of delight the men spring forward, crying, laughing, brandishing their knives, and eagerly devour the strips of raw blubber. That night they draw up their boat, and have a rare, savage feast cooked on the ice-floe. This proves the last of their sufferings. Seals become more plentiful. Onward the little boat creeps—they pass Cape Shackleton—they are nearing the happy homes of civilised men, and gradually realise that they are saved, and will yet grasp the loving hands they had hardly hoped to touch on earth. Presently, as they float onwards, a faint “halloo” is borne to them over the waves. It is the first Christian voice that greets their return to the world. How eagerly the poor fellows bend to their oars and follow the sound! The mast of a little shallop shews itself. Petersen, their Danish interpreter, recognises it as the Uppernavick oil-boat; and overcome by his pent-up feelings, bursts into an incoherent fit of crying, relieved by broken exclamations in English and Danish, gulping down his words and wringing his hands. How eagerly they hang on the words of the skipper of the oil-boat, as he doles out the news of the last two

years ! “Sevastopol ain’t taken yet,” he says ; and now for the first time they learn that England and France have combined against Russia ; that Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman have been fought, that Czar Nicholas is dead ; and that Sebastopol is surrounded by a battling host of a hundred thousand men. They also learn that traces of the lost Sir John Franklin have been found a thousand miles south of the locality they had been searching ; and that an expedition had passed up into the ice to search for themselves. A few hours more and they enter the harbour of Uppernavick, which they had left two years before. They had been eighty-four days in the open air, during their memorable retreat ; and find they cannot remain in a house without a distressing sense of suffocation. On the 6th of September they set sail in a Danish vessel ; but just as they are leaving Godhavn the squadron sent in search of them appears, and their countrymen “welcome them back with cheers to the social world of love which they represented.”

Our tale is ended. Considering Kane’s achievement in all its aspects, are we not justified in ranking him among the heroic spirits of our age ? With a high and noble purpose before him, he pursued his object with the unflinching courage and perseverance of a hero, and in the spirit of a Christian—braving difficulties, dangers, sufferings the most appalling.

Whether we consider the work he did, the inadequate means at his disposal, or the spirit in which he wrought, we must equally pronounce his achievement glorious. If the truly great man is he who hews his way through obstacles that to other men are insurmountable, not in a self-seeking, but a self-denying spirit, under the guidance of conscience, sustained by a sense of duty, then must we reckon Kane one of heroic mould. The immediate results, the material benefits of such an enterprise may appear insignificant ; but the moral, the spiritual results cannot be reckoned. These self-denying heroic spirits, that from time to time God sends into our world, are the very life of our humanity. They create epochs, break the sluggish sleep of ages, and raise our race to higher moral levels. The noble deed, wherever it is wrought, not only brings an immediate blessing to the doer and to the object of his action, but becomes the seed of other noble deeds to coming generations. Duty bravely done, danger heroically encountered, suffering patiently borne by gallant spirits, ever kindle a sacred enthusiasm in other souls, brace them for similar deeds, and so lift humanity to nobler heights. The story of Kane and his gallant few will fire many a young heart with high resolves ; for it is everlastingly true that—

“ Whene’er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene’er is spoken a noble thought,

Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

“ The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

“ Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs;
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low.”

LECTURE THE EIGHTH.

*REV. SYDNEY SMITH—HIS LIFE, WIT, AND
WISDOM.*

PREVIOUS to the publication of "The Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Sydney Smith," by his daughter, Lady Holland, he was widely known as the author of some of the ablest and raciest works in the English language, distinguished at once by sound sense and the richest humour. The appearance of this admirably-written memoir has raised his reputation still higher. Before his life and letters were given to the world, most people thought of Sydney Smith only as a brilliant wit, a fearless and able writer of political and literary articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, and the most charming of table-companions. But those who have read his life know that his wisdom was as striking as his wit; that his heart was as kind and good as his head was strong and

clear ; that he was a genial, tender man, a true lover of his kind ; a thorough hater of shams and insincerities, who, all through life, fought bravely on the side of truth and virtue, and did no small stroke of useful work in the world. I shall make use of this memoir, in trying to bring him before you under these aspects, so as to convey some idea of the man himself.

Sydney Smith was born at Woodford, in Essex, in the year 1771. It is of much consequence to us all who our fathers and mothers are ; for upon them we are dependent for most of our internal and external equipments for "the battle of life." Sydney was fortunate in both his parents. His father, a gentleman with a moderate independence, was remarkable for his natural gifts, being both clever and odd by nature, and possessed of a very active and sagacious mind. Like most distinguished men, however, Sydney owed most to his mother. She was the daughter of a French refugee, beautiful, accomplished, and highly gifted. To this infusion of French blood, bringing with it a dash of Celtic wit, Sydney believed that his constitutional gaiety was owing. In fact, he was a fine representative of the strength, depth, and earnestness of the English character, combined with the vivacity and light-heartedness of the French. He was the second of four brothers, who were all remarkable for their talents and acquirements. His biographer says that "to a

mother's early care of them, and to the respect with which her virtues and high tone of feeling inspired their young hearts, may be ascribed much that was good and great in their characters." From Winchester School, where he rose to be captain, Sydney went to New College, Oxford. Here he was successful in obtaining a Fellowship, and from that hour he was cast on his own resources, his father never after being called upon to contribute a farthing to his support. It was most honourable to him that, with the small income of £100 a year, the value of his Fellowship, he kept within his means, amid all the temptations of Oxford—incurred no debt—and even contrived to spare £30 to pay a debt of his younger brother Courtenay, who was going out to India.

It was in deference to his father's wishes, rather than from any desires of his own, that he entered the Church. His first curacy was in the midst of Salisbury plain. It would be difficult to imagine a more dreary outlook than that which presented itself to the young curate at his first start in life—without books, without any congenial society, a solitary waste around, and the village where he resided consisting only of a few scattered cottages. He used to relate that once a week a butcher's cart passed through the village, when, if in funds, he procured a joint of meat ; but that he often dined on a mess of potatoes flavoured with catchup. His own picture of a good

curate is very fine, and there can be no doubt that he exhibited at least some of the features he has delineated. "A curate is the poor working-man of God—a learned man in a hovel, good and patient—a comforter and a teacher—the first and purest pauper of the hamlet; yet shewing that in the midst of worldly misery he has the heart of a gentleman, the spirit of a Christian, and the kindness of a pastor." Many a man would have lost heart and hope in such circumstances, and deteriorated in feelings and character. But Sydney had that genuine, manly force of character that rises above outward circumstances; and by doing cheerfully and thoroughly the duty that lies nearest, however poor or mean that may be, makes the most unpromising things stepping-stones to success. The young curate made such a favourable impression on the squire of the parish, Mr Beach, that at the end of two years, he requested him to resign his living and become tutor to his eldest son, with a view to accompany him abroad. Their destination was the University of Weimar in Saxony; and had Sydney spent a few years here, in contact with German thought, and received an infusion of German philosophy as a counteractive to his lively temperament, there is no saying what effect this ingredient might have produced. But it was not so to be. War broke out; Germany was closed; and the tutor, with his pupil, was sent to Edinburgh, where he resided

five years. Here he imbibed Scotch, instead of German philosophy; and residing here so long, at the most critical period of a young man's life,—from his twenty-fifth to his thirtieth year,—we may truly say that Scottish influences largely helped to form the man. Scotland may, therefore, claim him as one of her foster-children. Let us see how Sydney fared in the refined society of Edinburgh.

It was in the year 1797 that Sydney Smith arrived in the metropolis of the North. Edinburgh then numbered a population of about 80,000—half its present amount; but then, as now, it could boast of possessing a highly-cultivated and intellectual society. It would be difficult to find in any period, or in any one place, such an array of intellect—such a cluster of distinguished names as graced the society of “the Modern Athens” at this time. Among those whose locks were whitened by age were Professors Playfair, Dugald Stewart, and Robison; on the bench, Lords Campbell, Glenlee, Meadowbank, and Cullen; the witty Harry Erskine at the bar; Dr Inglis and the Rev. Archibald Alison in the pulpit; Drs Gregory and John Bell in the medical profession. These were among the older or middle-aged worthies. The younger men, among whom Sydney Smith was more thrown, were of even higher mark. Walter Scott was becoming a celebrity; Francis Jeffrey was a young lawyer looking out for briefs; Brougham, the most

vehement of orators, and the hottest of reformers, was there, and but twenty-three years had yet passed over his head; the amiable and talented Francis Horner; Henry Cockburn; James Moncreiff; Thomas Brown, the future metaphysician; Thomas Campbell, whose "Pleasures of Hope" had been recently published; Leyden, the poet and linguist; the philosophic Lord Webb Seymour, and many others, made up such a brilliant intellectual circle as could then be paralleled in no other place. There was more freedom and sociality, and less conventionalism and expensive display, than now prevail; and, as a consequence, there was much pleasant and genial social intercourse. Sydney was welcomed here with genuine Scotch kindness, and retained ever after a grateful recollection of his reception. Some of his warmest and most lasting friendships were formed here. In his letters, written many years afterwards, he often refers to his residence in Edinburgh as a very happy period of his existence. In one of them he exclaims, "When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days passed there amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings!" Sydney loved Scotland and the Scotch; but with his vivid perception of the ludicrous, he could not help deriving some amusement from their national peculiarities and foibles; and he often made

his Scotch friends laugh heartily by telling them how things appeared to his English eye. He seems to have formed an unjust estimate of Scottish humour; for he used to say, "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding." If Sydney meant this for anything more than a laughter-provoking exaggeration, then he must have formed his judgment from some exceptional and wooden-headed specimens of Scotchmen; and he must have ignored Scottish literature, which is rich in the raciest humour. The wit of Burns, Scott, Wilson, and a host of others, has not fallen upon their countrymen without due appreciation. In our own day Dean Ramsay has gathered up, in his "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," some of the floating witticisms and traditionary humours of Scotland; and after reading these volumes, I think the conclusion of most persons would be that Scottish national humour is deep and full-bodied; and I am of opinion that the man who does not relish this book ought to have a surgical operation performed on his "dome of thought." "No nation," said Sydney, "has so large a stock of benevolence of heart. If you meet an accident, half Edinburgh immediately flocks to your door to inquire after your *puir* hand or your *puir* foot, and with a degree of interest that convinces you their whole hearts are in the inquiry. You find they usually arrange their dishes at dinner by the points of the

compass. ‘Sandy, put the gigot of mutton to the south, and move the singet sheep’s-head a wee bit to the nor’-wast.’ If you knock at the door, you hear a shrill female voice from the fifth flat shriek out, ‘Wha’s chapping at the door?’ which is presently opened by a lassie with short petticoats, bare legs, and thick ankles. My Scotch servants bargained they were not to have salmon more than three times a week, and always pulled off their stockings, in spite of my repeated objurgations, the moment my back was turned.” “Their temper stands anything but an attack on their climate: even the enlightened mind of Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish at Craigcrook. In vain I have represented to him that they are of the genus *Carduus*, and pointed out their prickly peculiarities.” A troublesome bore at this time reigned in Edinburgh, who plagued every one with his favourite subject, the North Pole. One day he met Jeffrey in a narrow lane, and commenced on the usual topic. Losing patience, Jeffrey rushed past him, exclaiming, “Confound the North Pole!” Sydney met him soon after, boiling with indignation at Jeffrey’s contempt of the North Pole. “Oh, my dear fellow,” said Sydney, “never mind. No one minds what Jeffrey says, you know; he is a privileged person. He respects nothing, absolutely nothing. Why, you will scarcely believe it, but it is

not more than a week ago that I heard him speak disrespectfully of the equator."

After a residence of two years in Edinburgh, he returned to England to marry Miss Pybus, a young lady to whom he had been engaged for some time. He was so entirely unburdened with worldly goods wherewith to endow her, that his whole contribution to their housekeeping was six small silver teaspoons, the ghosts of their former selves, being skeletonised by long service. Running into the room one day, mad with joy, he flung these into his wife's lap, saying, "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune." His wife, however, had some fortune, which he at once settled on herself; and with the proceeds from the sale of a pearl necklace, amounting to £500, they returned to Edinburgh and commenced housekeeping. His generosity of heart may be judged of from the fact that, when in these straitened circumstances, he aided a poor lady in Edinburgh, who had fallen into difficulties, with a loan of £100, and contributed £40 to help on the education of a clever shepherd-boy in Teviotdale. An interesting event, too, was approaching, that might have made him more selfish—he was about to attain the honours of paternity. He expressed a wish that it might be a daughter, and that she might be born with one eye, so that he might never lose her. A daughter it

proved, but with two eyes; and disdaining to take any of the ordinary hackneyed names, he invented a new one, and called her Saba.

During his residence in Edinburgh, he was on terms of the closest intimacy with Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy, and a constant attendant upon his lectures; also with Dr Thomas Brown, his successor. He also studied medicine and anatomy, and in after life turned his medical knowledge to good account among his parishioners. By far the most important event in his Edinburgh life was the origination of the renowned periodical, which, under the title of the *Edinburgh Review*, flourishes still. This is his account of its origin:—"Towards the end of my residence in Edinburgh, Brougham, Jeffrey, and myself happened to meet in the eighth or ninth flat in Buccleuch Place, the then elevated residence of Mr Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a review; this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the *Review*. When I left Edinburgh, it fell into the stronger hands of Lords Jeffrey and Brougham, and reached the highest point of popularity and success." This was in 1802; and on the 10th of October in that year the first number of the *Edinburgh Review* saw the light. It at once produced a sensation; and by the talent, originality, and honesty with which it was conducted, created a

new era in British literature, and introduced a new order of things in literary criticism. All the great quarterly rivals that have arisen since have imitated its method, and attained influence by following its track. The *Edinburgh Review* embodied the opinions in politics and literature of the young, ardent, hopeful spirits of the day, who were dissatisfied with things as they were—with time-honoured abuses, ivy-grown respectabilities, stupidities, and blunders that were sadly in need of interment. Against these the *Review* declared war, and pursued its attacks with a vigour, courage, and consistency that soon won for it a high place in the esteem of the liberal and enlightened portion of society. Almost every one will now admit that the *Edinburgh Review* has done noble service in the cause of freedom and wise reform, and has aided most materially in creating a more healthy condition in the general thought and literature of the country. Almost all the reforms for which it fought so bravely and so long, have been gradually yielded. At the beginning of the century, owing very much to the terror inspired by the principles and course of the French Revolution, a strong tendency was operating in Britain, leading to resistance to all changes and reforms; and the grossest abuses, corruptions, and outrages against common sense, were defended as parts of that venerable constitution under which England had risen to

greatness, and to meddle with which would be sacrilege. Perfection was believed to be attained; and any one who talked about the need of reform was regarded as a dangerous character—a cut-throat, or a French revolutionist. So great are the improvements that have taken place during the last half-century, that we can now scarcely credit the terrible abuses that were then not only tolerated, but fiercely defended. The Test and Corporation Acts were then in full force; prisoners tried for their lives could have no counsel; the law of libel was atrocious; the Court of Chancery a hundred-fold more oppressive than in these days, when it is tottering to its grave. Had Dickens published “Bleak House” in the days of Lord Eldon, he would inevitably have been imprisoned for life. The slave-trade was then most respectable, sustained by Church and State alike. The criminal laws were cruel and bloody; a petty theft was punished by hanging. The game-laws were a disgrace to any civilised community. The Roman Catholics had no political rights. Political Economy was an unborn science; and the most melancholy blunders in legislation prevailed. It required no small amount of moral courage to assail this host of venerable abuses; to dare to belong to a small despised minority; to incur the displeasure and hatred of men in power, whose interests and prejudices were all bound up with the continuance of things as they were.

And it gives us a high opinion of the genuine nobility of heart and soul possessed by Sydney Smith, to find him clear-sighted enough to see where right and justice lay, and honest enough to follow them for their own sake, amid scorn and detraction. He originated, as we have seen, the *Edinburgh Review*, which, in due time, became a mighty force in political matters; and for years, in its pages and outside them, he employed his great talents, his captivating wit, his terrible powers of ridicule, his sturdy logic, and clear, bright understanding, in the advocacy of those wise reforms of which we are to-day reaping the fruits, and the introduction of which has saved England from those revolutionary storms that have swept over other kingdoms. It is unreformed abuses that create revolutions—that make wise men mad—that raise into power, for the time being, as in the French Revolution, the lowest and basest of mankind; and the true friend of his country is he who tries to remedy imperfections, right wrongs, remove corruptions, secure enlightened progress, and so make the new spring organically out of the old, instead of being born amid the rude convulsive throes of revolution. It was at no small sacrifice of self-interest that Sydney Smith, and those who thought with him, carried on the war against abuses and corruptions. He says himself that the penalties exacted for such a course were “a long and hopeless career in your profession; the

chuckling grin of noodles ; the sarcastic leer of the genuine political rogue ; prebendaries, deans, bishops made over your head. Not only was there no pay, but there were many stripes. Not a murmur against any abuse was permitted ; to say a word against the sutorcide delays of the Court of Chancery, or the cruel punishments of the game-laws, or against any abuse which a rich man inflicted or a poor man suffered, was treason against the plousiocracy, and was bitterly and steadily resented. Lord Grey had not then taken the bearing rein off the English people, as Sir Francis Head has done from horses." His daughter truly says of him, during the many years that he was engaged as a public writer, that "his pen was never sullied by private passion, or private interest, never degraded by an impure or unworthy motive ; and, withal, its unexampled powers of sarcasm, never wounded but for the public good." Lord Montegle said, "Looking at all he did, and the way in which he did it, it must be an inexpressible pleasure to all who knew, valued, and loved him, to observe that there was scarcely one question in which the moral, the intellectual, the social, or even physical wellbeing of his fellow-men were concerned, to the advancement of which he has not endeavoured to contribute." This is noble testimony, and nobly deserved. Throughout his whole life he was the advocate of toleration, of educational extension and im-

provement, of justice for the colonies, of mercy and kindness for the poor lunatic, of humane treatment and justice for the prisoner, of that splendid reform in our laws, initiated by Romilly and Mackintosh, which has mitigated so many of the most crying evils connected with our civil and criminal code. If we are now living under happier skies than those who lived half a century ago, let us not forget that Sydney Smith, by his wit and logic, helped largely to abolish many of the foulest cobwebs ; and, with a strong arm and a stout heart, dealt some of the deadliest blows against those corruptions, consecrated shams, and wickedness in high places, that threatened, at one time, to destroy the national life of England, and drive her from her high place among the nations. For the brave and bold stroke of work in this direction, achieved by Sydney Smith, let him have the applause and gratitude of all who love their kind.

After a residence of between five and six years in Edinburgh, Sydney Smith settled in London. This step proved to be the commencement of a most successful career. At the outset of his course, when a friend procured for him a lectureship at the Foundling Hospital, worth only £50 a year, he very gladly accepted it, and discharged its duties well and faithfully. He was afterwards appointed morning preacher at Berkley Chapel. Here his services were so appreciated that in a few weeks the chapel, which had been

quite deserted before, was crowded to the very doors, and every pew was let. His bold, concise, racy style broke the slumbers of these church-going Londoners ; made them feel that a sermon was not necessarily an opiate ; and that they were listening to a man of sense, earnestness, and intelligence, who had something to say, and who felt what he said. Dugald Stewart said, after hearing him preach, "Those original and unexpected ideas gave me a thrilling sensation of sublimity never before awakened by any other oratory." In fact, he furnished a practical illustration of his own published views in regard to pulpit oratory. In 1801 he said, in a preface to one of his works, "Preaching has become a by-word for long and dull conversation of any kind ; and whoever wishes to imply, in any piece of writing, the absence of everything agreeable and inviting, calls it a sermon." "The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. A clergyman clings to his velvet cushion with either hand, keeps his eye riveted upon his book, speaks of the ecstasies of joy and fear with a voice and a face which indicate neither, and pinions his body and soul into the same attitude of limb and thought, for fear of being thought theatrical or affected. The most intrepid veteran of us all dares no more than wipe his face with his cambric *suda-*

rium ; if, by chance, his hand slip from its orthodox gripe of the velvet, he draws it back as from liquid brimstone, or the caustic iron of the law, and atones for this indecorum by fresh inflexibility and more rigorous sameness. Is it wonder, then, that every semi-delirious sectary, who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine look and voice of passion, should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine of the Established Church, and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton ? Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit ? No man expresses warm and animated feelings anywhere else, with his mouth alone, but with his whole body ; he articulates with every limb, and talks, from head to foot, with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone ? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety ? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest and the driest manner ? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber ? Or from what possible perversion of common sense are we all to look like field-preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice numbed into quiescence and stagnation and mumbling ?”

During his residence in London, Sydney Smith added immensely to his reputation by delivering a course of lectures on moral philosophy at the Royal

Institution. Only a man of genius could have treated this dry subject in such a way as to draw eager, listening crowds from the most refined and luxurious circles of the great metropolis. Perhaps no other man in London could have achieved such a triumph. His wonderful wit and humour did him good service on this occasion, enabling him to adorn and render attractive the solid information he imparted, and to relieve the attention agreeably by joke, anecdote, or pleasantry. Francis Horner, in his letters, says of these lectures, "his success was great beyond all possible conjecture—from six to eight hundred hearers—not a seat to be procured, even if you go there an hour before the time. Nobody else, to be sure, could have executed such an undertaking with the least chance of success. For who could make such a mixture of odd paradox, quaint fun, manly sense, liberal opinions, and striking language?" He continued these lectures for three successive seasons, with increased success, his audience filling the lobbies and doorways, and their carriages choking up the street. At this time Sydney formed a friendship with the celebrated Lord Holland, which continued unabated till his death. He was thus introduced to Holland House with its brilliant society. To this dazzling centre were attracted all that was notable in the scientific, literary, artistic, or political circles of London, or rather of Europe. The proceeds of his

lectures were considerable; still he was poor; but it was poverty easily borne. He had the sense and courage to avow his poverty, and to live in accordance with his means: no false shame; no ruinous attempts at keeping up appearances; consequently, no debt. He was satisfied with the simple comforts of life, but exercised the most rigid self-denial as to luxuries. His favourite motto throughout life was, "Avoid shame; but do not seek glory—nothing so expensive as glory." He had within himself a natural source of happiness, which never failed him throughout life—a perpetual flow of spirits—a cheerfulness of disposition, for which he often thanked God, as one of the greatest benefits conferred on him. His daughter says, "At this period of his life his spirits were often such that they were more like the joyousness and playfulness of a clever schoolboy than the sobriety and gravity of the father of a family; and his gaiety was so irresistible and so infectious, that it carried everything before it. Nothing could withstand the contagion of that ringing, joy-inspiring laugh."

Sydney Smith's London life lasted three years, during which he was lecturing, preaching, and writing for the *Edinburgh Review*. At the end of this period he obtained, through his friend Lord Holland, the living of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire. It was just before his removal to this new scene of labour that he published "Letters from Peter Plymley to

his brother Abraham," on the subject of the Irish Catholics. Never was wit turned to better account than in these celebrated letters; and never was its value in giving pungency to sound argument better exemplified. Edition after edition was called for, as fast as the press could supply copies. "Few works," says his daughter, "ever did more to open men's minds to the absurdity and danger of the system then pursued by England; and there are, or rather were, few Catholics who did not venerate the name of Sydney Smith as one who, though an honest servant of another Church, felt that the strongest tenet of that Church was charity and mercy; and in this feeling laboured incessantly to remove the heavy burdens and disqualifications imposed on them by the actual state of the laws." Soon after these letters appeared, Sydney left behind him all the popularity and intoxicating applause of London for the dull routine of a Yorkshire village. The prospects presented in his new situation were anything but cheering, and the difficulties he had to encounter were of a serious character. His living consisted of three hundred acres of the stiffest clay, no parsonage, no farm-buildings; and as there was no tithe, and his income must be derived from land, he was compelled to turn farmer. A recent act of Parliament rendered it imperative on him to build a parsonage-house out of his private resources, or resign his living. He must also

move his family and household furniture from London to the heart of Yorkshire—an undertaking in the year 1808 as difficult as a journey to the back settlements of America now, to a man with small means. Here were difficulties enough ; and then add to these that he was as ignorant of farming as if he had never been beyond the bounds of London. He thus describes his position at this time :—“ A diner-out, a wit, and a popular preacher, I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York and transported to my living in Yorkshire. Fresh from London, not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and, without capital, to build a parsonage-house.” He faced his new difficulties, however, with a brave heart and the most indomitable good humour ; and by sagacity, energy, and perseverance overcame them all, shewing true English “ pluck,” and proving that he was “ no end of a man.” He went about the business in hand with so much good sense as to gain the respect even of his old clerk, the most important man in the village, who, after holding a long conversation with him, and observing him with all the keen shrewdness of a Yorkshire man, said, “ Muster Smith, it often stroikes my moind that people as comes frae London are such fools ; but you,” said he, nudging him with his stick, “ I see you are no fool.” Hear how the cheery, joyous man describes his achievement in after years, and observe how the

wholesome, hearty nature of Sydney Smith could extract food for laughter out of his distresses, and bring music out of the most discordant elements:—"I landed my family in my new house, nine months after laying the first stone, on the 20th March; and performed my promise to the letter to the archbishop, by issuing forth at midnight with a lantern to meet the last cart, with the cook and cat, which had stuck in the mud, and fairly established them before twelve o'clock at night in the new parsonage-house,—a feat, taking ignorance, inexperience, and poverty into consideration, requiring, I assure you, no small degree of energy. It made me a poor man for many years; but I never repented it. I turned schoolmaster to educate my son. Mrs Sydney turned schoolmistress to educate my girls, as I could not afford a governess. I turned farmer, as I could not let my land. A man-servant was too expensive; so I caught up a little garden-girl, made like a millstone, christened her Bunch, put a napkin in her hand, and made her my butler. The girls taught her to read, Mrs Sydney to wait, and I undertook her morals. Bunch became the best butler in the country. I had little furniture; so I bought a cart-load of deals, took a carpenter who came to me for parish relief, called Jack Robinson, with a face like a full moon, into my service, established him in a barn, and said, 'Jack, furnish my house.' You see the result." "Added to

all these domestic cares, I was village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate, and Edinburgh Reviewer; so you see I had not much time on my hands to regret London." "My house was considered the ugliest in the country; but all admitted it was one of the most comfortable."

Here is a bright little picture, drawn by his daughter, of their arrival at their new parsonage:—"It was a cold, bright March day, with a biting east wind. Waggon after waggon of furniture poured in every minute; the roads were so cut up that the carriage could not reach the door; and my mother lost her shoe in the mud, which was ankle-deep, while bringing her infant up to the house in her arms. But, oh! the shout of joy, as we entered and took possession—the first time in our lives we had inhabited a house of our own. How we admired it, ugly as it was! With what pride my dear father took us from room to room. We thought it a palace; yet the drawing-room had no door; the bare plaster-walls ran down with wet; the windows were like ground glass, from the moisture. No carpets—no chairs—nothing unpacked—rough men bringing in rougher packages at every moment. But then was the time to behold my father. Amidst the confusion he thought of everybody—encouraged everybody—kept everybody in good humour. How he exerted himself!—how his rich loud voice might be heard in all directions!

Each half-hour improved our condition ; fires blazed in every room. At last we sat down to our tea, spread by ourselves on a huge package before the drawing-room fire, sitting on boxes round it, and retired to sleep on beds placed on the floor—the happiest, merriest, busiest family in Christendom. In a few days, under my father's active exertions, everything was arranged with tolerable comfort in the little household."

This scene brings out strongly one of the most noticeable features of Sydney's mind—its thoroughly practical bent. The duty at hand, whatever it is, he does thoroughly, with his whole soul—throwing all his energies into it—doing "whatever his hand finds to do with his might." No man was ever less inclined for abstractions. The world around him—its realities, its duties—for these he has an eye ; cloudland attracts him not. He must live in the tangible and actual. The strong, healthy mind of the man takes in small as well as great matters. He can write an article for the *Edinburgh Review*, and arrange the minutest affair of house-keeping equally well, and with almost equal ardour and enjoyment. One of his favourite mottoes was, "Take short views, hope for the best, and trust in God"—a sentence that might be advantageously written over every mantel-piece, and on every memory. Again he said, "Don't be too severe upon yourself and your own failings ; keep on ; don't

faint; be energetic to the last." "Fight against sloth, and do all you can to make friends." "When you meet with neglect, let it rouse you to exertion, instead of mortifying your pride. Set about lessening the defects which expose you to neglect, and improve those excellences which command attention and respect." "Rise early in the morning, not only to avoid self-reproach, but to make the most of the little life that remains." "Reverence and stand in awe of yourself." At times, however, this realistic man has his meditations. "How nature delights and amuses, by varying even the character of insects—the ill nature of the wasp, the sluggishness of the drone, the volatility of the butterfly, the slyness of the bug." He had a horse at this time, from whose back he got so many falls that he ceased to consider such adventures as at all dangerous; and he christened the unlucky quadruped "Calamity." He was an unsightly, raw-boned animal, with an exceedingly keen appetite, and withal so sluggish that the whip had no effect. Sydney's ingenuity, however, was equal to the occasion. He invented what he called a "patent Tantalus," "which consisted of a small sieve of corn suspended on a semi-circular bar of iron from the ends of the shafts, just beyond the horse's nose. The corn rattling as the vehicle proceeded, stimulated Calamity to unwonted exertions; and, in the hope of overtaking his imaginary feed, he did more work than all the

previous provender which had been poured down his throat had been able to obtain from him." Thus he works and laughs on, seeing the ludicrous on every side, and enjoying it. What else was it given for? He corrects his servant Bunch's faults effectually, but he must do it in a humorous fashion. "Come here, Bunch," he said one day, "and repeat your faults to Mrs Marcet;" and Bunch, a clean, fair, squat, tidy little girl, about ten or twelve years of age, quite as a matter of course, and as grave as a judge, without the least hesitation, and with a loud voice, began to repeat, "Plate-snatching—gravy-spilling—door-slamming—blue-bottle fly-catching—and courtesy-bobbing." "Explain to Mrs Marcet what blue-bottle fly-catching is." "Standing with my mouth open, and not attending, sir." "And what is courtesy-bobbing?" "Courtesying to the centre of the earth, please, sir." "Good girl; now you may go." It might be worth while for some mistresses to consider whether a catechism of this kind, daily repeated by their servants, might not be more effectual in curing faults, than the less humorous method of scolding which is usually adopted, to the great injury of temper and comfort.

For ten years he continued to work on cheerily, in this dreary little Yorkshire parish,—asking no favour—fawning on no patron—stooping to no mean degrading acts to secure the favour of the great—

carving out his own way in the world. He had a proud, sturdy independence, that would not brook any such meanness. He loved to be able to say that he was the fabricator of his own fortune ; and when asked for the Smith arms, his reply was, " The Smiths never had any arms, and have invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs." No man could be more genial in his domestic relations. He was emphatically a good husband, father, and master, anxious for the welfare and happiness of all around him. He had no pleasure apart from his wife and children. Like all kind-hearted men, he was very fond of children, and liked to have them around him. He took a lively interest in all the pursuits and happiness of his own children, and never lost an opportunity of instructing or amusing them. He loved to discuss with them, as they grew older, topics likely to interest and improve them ; and would refute their crude and foolish opinions with the greatest patience. His daughter says, " As we grew up we became his companions ; we were called into all family councils ; his letters were common property ; the tenderest mother could not have been more anxious and careful as to the religious tendency of any books we read." " In an evening, often with a child on each knee, he would invent a tale for their amusement, composed of such ludicrous images and combinations as nobody else would have thought of, succeeding each other with the greatest

rapidity; these were devoured by them, with eyes and ears, in breathless interest; but, at the most thrilling moment, always terminated with ‘and so they lived very happy ever after’—a kiss on each fat cheek—‘and now go to bed.’” Another touching anecdote is related. “One of his little children, then in delicate health, had for some time been in the habit of waking suddenly every evening, sobbing, anticipating the death of parents, and all the sorrows of life, before life had begun. He could not bear this unnatural union of childhood and sorrow; and for a long period, I have heard my mother say, each evening found him, at the waking of his child, with a toy, a picture-book, a bunch of grapes, or a joyous tale, mixed with a little strengthening advice, and the tenderest caresses, till the habit was broken, and the child woke to joy and not to sorrow.”

Among his parishioners he was a most sympathising, kind, laborious pastor. He attended to their physical as well as their spiritual condition, setting on foot gardens for the poor, and offering prizes for the best vegetables. He also studied the best and cheapest diet for the poor; and, says his daughter, “many a hungry labourer was brought in and stuffed with rice, or broth, or porridge, to test their relative effects on the appetite. In the year 1816 there was a failure of the harvest, and the sufferings of the poor were excessive. The wheat sprouted generally, and

was unfit for bread. Like his poorer neighbours, Sydney and his family lived for a whole year on thin, unleavened, sweet-tasting cakes, like frost-bitten potatoes, baked on tins—the only way of using the damaged flour.” Fever and infectious diseases prevailed in his parish during this trying season. His exertions among the poor were indefatigable—going from cottage to cottage, providing them with food and medicine, and seeing that the sick were properly attended to. His medical training stood him in good stead now. When the difficulty of obtaining nurses and burying the dead became great, owing to the terror of the people, he shamed them into better conduct, by threatening to become nurse and undertaker himself. Honour to those who, without hope of fame or reward, for the love of God and of their fellow-men, brave danger and death, to lighten the heavy load of human misery. Let us bear in mind, too, that the man who was here toiling among these Yorkshire peasants was lately the popular preacher and lecturer of London, and an established favourite in the brilliant set of Holland House. But here, without any ostentation, and in the spirit of a Christian pastor, he is nobly doing his duty—comforting and helping the poor—enlightening the world by the productions of his pen—and, at the same time, diffusing an atmosphere of joyousness around him. Of the style of his preaching, I have already spoken. He said to a

friend one day, "I can't bear to be imprisoned, in the true orthodox way, in my pulpit, with my head just peeping above the desk. I like to look down upon my congregation and fire into them. The common people say, I am a *bould* preacher, for I like to have my arms free, and to thump the pulpit."

The heavy debt he was obliged to incur in building his parsonage-house long hung heavily on his spirits, giving him, as his wife used to tell afterwards, sleepless nights of anxiety as to the future provision for his children. "It was very fine to see his wife and children, at this crisis of affairs, holding a family council to see if it were not possible to economise in something more, and lessen their daily expenses to assist him." With such affectionate help he could hardly sink. He had the knack of making the best of circumstances, and the ingenuity that enabled him to combine economy, taste, and comfort. There can be little doubt that he was a very happy man, and had the art of making ail around him happy. He said on one occasion, "Never give way to melancholy: resist it steadily, for the habit will encroach. I once gave a lady twenty-two recipes against melancholy: one was a bright fire; another, to remember all the pleasant things said to and of her; another, to keep a box of sugar plums on the chimney-piece, and a kettle simmering on the hob. I thought this mere trifling at the moment; but have, in after-life, dis-

covered how true it is that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than higher and more exalted subjects, and that no means ought to be thought too trifling which can oppose it, either in ourselves or others." In another of his writings, he gives a still better recipe for making every day happy: "When you rise in the morning form a resolution to make the day a happy one to a fellow-creature. It is easily done: a left-off garment to the man who needs it; a kind word to the sorrowful; an encouraging expression to the striving; trifles light as air will do it, at least for the twenty-four hours; and if you are young, depend upon it it will tell when you are old; and if you are old, rest assured it will send you gently and happily down the stream of human time to eternity." "The haunts of happiness are varied and rather unaccountable; but I have oftener seen her among little children, home firesides, and country houses, than anywhere else, at least I think so." The practical skill he acquired in matters of domestic economy may be gathered from the following anecdote, which is worth the attention of all who have to buy soap. "Have you never observed," he said, "what a dislike servants have to anything cheap? They hate saving their master's money. I tried the experiment with great success the other day. Finding we consumed a great deal of soap, I sat down in my thinking chair, and took the soap ques-

tion into consideration, and found reason to suspect that we were using a very expensive article, where a much cheaper one would serve the purpose better. I ordered half-a-dozen pounds of both sorts, but took the precaution of changing the papers on which the prices were marked, before giving them into the hands of Betty. 'Well, Betty, which soap do you find washes best?' 'Oh, please, sir, the dearest in the blue paper; it makes a lather as well again as the other.' 'Well, Betty, you shall always have it then;' and thus the unsuspecting Betty saved me some pounds a year, and washed the clothes better."

The day of promotion at last arrived. Lord Lyndhurst, to his honour, though opposed to Sydney Smith in politics, from the respect he had for his talents and character, had the courage to brave the opinions and opposition of his own party, and to bestow on him a prebendal stall then vacant in Bristol; and thus, after being shut up in this dreary little corner of Yorkshire for nearly eleven years, he emerged into the sunshine once more as Prebend of Bristol Cathedral. His income was not improved by the change; but it placed him in a much better position, and put him in the way of further promotion, by making his talents known. He considered it a piece of good fortune, and an addition to his happiness. "Moralists tell you," said he, "of the evils of wealth and of station,

and the happiness of poverty. I have been very poor the greater part of my life, and have borne it as well, I believe, as most people ; but I can safely say that I have been happier every guinea I have gained." He commenced his labours characteristically and boldly, by preaching, on the 5th November, a sermon in favour of religious toleration, in presence of a number of dignitaries who were expecting to hear something very different, and to whom his sentiments were very distasteful. By his honest boldness, however, he won the respect even of those who differed from him most widely, and speedily became popular in his new sphere. His appointment rendered it necessary that he should resign his Yorkshire living, and settle in Somersetshire ; and, by the kindness of Lord Lyndhurst, he was enabled to exchange Foston for the much smaller, but more beautifully situated living of Combe Florey, near Taunton. Here, again, he found the parsonage-house in a ruinous condition, and had to spend two thousand pounds in repairing it ; but with his enlarged means and experience, he was able to make it one of the most charming parsonages in England. The first use he made of his increased wealth was to enlarge his library. One of his sorest privations in Yorkshire was his want of books. They were so few in number as to occupy only one end of a little dining-room ; now he filled three sides of a large room with them, and revelled in their society. "No

furniture," he used to say, "so charming as books, even if you never open them or read a single word." The world was now smiling on Sydney, and the honours came thick and fast. Lord Grey, on his accession to power in 1830, made him Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, London,—an office which he held up to the close of his life. It would seem, too, that it was in contemplation to raise him to the episcopal bench, though it was not acted on; and Lord Melbourne said long afterwards, that "there was nothing he more deeply regretted, in looking back on his past career, than the not having made Sydney Smith a bishop." There can be no doubt that he would have discharged the duties of such an office admirably, had he been called to undertake them. In a posthumous fragment, he describes his views of the duties connected with such an exalted station thus: "I never remember in my time a real bishop—a grave, elderly man, full of Greek, with sound views of the middle voice and preter-pluperfect tense; gentle and kind to his poor clergy; of powerful and commanding eloquence; in Parliament never to be put down when the great interests of mankind were concerned; leaning to the Government when it was right, leaning to the people when they were right; feeling that, if called to that high office, he was called for no mean purpose, but rather that, seeing clearly, acting boldly, and intending purely, he might confer lasting benefit

upon mankind." The celebrated Miss Edgeworth was exceedingly desirous of seeing him made an Irish bishop; and in a letter to one of his daughters she thus happily and humorously describes the blessings he would be likely to confer on Ireland in that capacity: "One letter from Sydney Smith on the affairs of Ireland, with his name to it, and after having been there, would do more for us than his letters did for America and England. A bold assertion, you will say; and so it is; but I calculate that Pat is a far better subject for wit than Jonathan: it only plays round Jonathan's head, but it goes to Pat's heart—to the very bottom of his heart, where he loves it; and he don't care whether it is for or against him, so that it is real *wit* and *fun*. Now, Pat would doat upon your father; and kiss the rod with all his soul he would—the lash just lifted—when he'd see the laugh on the face, the kind smile, that would tell him it was all for his good. Your father would lead Pat (for he'd never drive him) to the world's end, and maybe to common sense at the end; and might open his eyes to the true state of things and persons."

The remaining portion of Sydney Smith's life was uneventful, and furnishes no incidents worth dwelling on. He was now surrounded by admiring and loving friends, living in the beautiful Combe Florey during the summer, and spending a good deal of his time in London, where his society was much courted. By

the sudden death of his younger brother Courtenay, who had gone out to India, and amassed a large fortune, he became unexpectedly a rich man, and for ever bade farewell to poverty. His former privations had not made him penurious, as is so frequently the case ; and now that he had a fortune, he lived in accordance with his means. He was fond of a change of residence ; and on one occasion paid a visit to his old friend Lord Jeffrey, in Edinburgh, taking all his family with him. "A most agreeable visit we had," says his daughter ; "for in addition to the enjoyment of Lord Jeffrey's society, at every stray moment he could steal from his business, we were received with open arms by all our old Scotch friends ; and when they do open their arms, there are no people so kind and so hospitable as the Scotch." Ten years after leaving Foston, his daughter relates that she went there to see some of their old haunts, and was much gratified at finding her father's memory still fresh in the hearts of the villagers. From almost every cottage some one came out to greet her, and to remind her of some saying or some act of kindness, or to shew her his parting gift, or to remember how he doctored them, and lament his loss. Surely there must have been fountains of love and goodness in the heart of the man who could so captivate the affections of others, and leave behind him such happy memories wherever he went. As years rolled on he

had the trials incident to advancing age to encounter. His greatest trial was the loss of his eldest son, a most talented and promising young man, at the early age of twenty-four. Old friends, one after the other, were dropping into the grave. Sir James M'Intosh's death, one of his earliest and most attached friends, affected him much. Of him he wrote, "When I turn from living spectacles of stupidity, ignorance, and malice, and wish to think better of the world, I remember my great and benevolent friend M'Intosh." His friend and benefactor, Lord Holland, was next removed. Speaking of his death, he said, "It is indeed a great loss to me; but I have learned to live as a soldier does in war, expecting that on any one moment the best and the dearest may be killed before his eyes." Age, with its infirmities, was now creeping on him; still his tendency to look at the ludicrous side of things continued as strong as ever. "I feel so weak," he said once, "in mind and body, that I verily believe if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength or energy enough to *stick it into a dissenter*." Writing to the Countess of Carlisle regarding the state of his health, he said, "If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of human flesh, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me." When his last illness commenced, from the dread of inflicting pain on those dearest to him, and of seeing sorrowful faces around him, he

always spoke calmly and cheerfully, and as if unaware of his danger. Speaking of the extraordinary interest that had been evinced by his friends for his recovery,—for the inquiries at his door were incessant,—he said, “It gives me pleasure, I own, as it shews I have not misused the powers intrusted to me.” He died at peace with himself and with all the world, anxious to the last to promote the happiness and comfort of others. He sent messages of kindness and forgiveness to the few he thought had injured him. Almost his last act was bestowing a small living of £120 per annum on a poor, worthy, and friendless clergyman, who had lived a long life of struggle with poverty, on £40 per annum. He died on the 22d February 1845, aged seventy-four years. His son closed his eyes. He was buried, by his own desire, as privately as possible, in the cemetery of Kensal Green, where his wife and son repose by his side. “And,” says his daughter, “if true greatness consists, as my dear and valued friend, Mr Rogers, once quoted from an ancient Greek writer, ‘in doing what deserves to be written, and writing what deserves to be read, and in making mankind happier and better for your life,’ my father was a truly great and good man.”

On a survey of the whole career of Sydney Smith, ~~I think~~ you will agree with me in pronouncing him an honest and good man—one who, on the whole, fought life's battle well, and lived among his fellows

full of kind thoughts and good deeds ; loving and lovable ; just and sincere ; walking in no vain show himself ; dreading the very semblance of guile and hypocrisy ; hating insincerity of all kinds himself ; calling things by their right names ; and fearlessly doing what in him lay to root out wrong and injustice. There is that in his career which should rouse us all to the inquiry, whether we are engaged on the right side in the long-drawn battle between good and evil that is raging around us. If any young man is tempted, in this age of doubt and insincerity, to question whether life has any great purpose—whether, after all, self is not the thing to live for—not truth, or righteousness, or goodness,—if in dark moments he is inclined to question whether a life of purity, honesty, virtue, religion be the main thing he should aim at, let him study the career of such a man as Sydney Smith ; and I think it will help him to reverence the right and the good, to love truth better than self-interest, and to esteem the approbation of conscience better than the applause of the multitude, or the wealth of the world. Sydney Smith was a man who dared to think for himself—to search after truth with a sincere desire to find it ; and having found it,—he cared not whether it was in a minority of one, or a majority of a million,—he fought for it, and, if necessary, suffered for it. Nearly all his life he found himself on the side of the

minority, and that often a very small one. Those great and beneficent reforms which he spent his unrivalled powers in advocating, and which all wise men now approve of, were at first almost in a minority of one; and that had to be worked up to a majority by hard battling before these improvements could be carried out practically. Let us give all due honour to those brave men who bore the burden and heat of the day, and who manfully stood up for the right in spite of scorn and obloquy. It is very easy to shout for the truth when she has the multitude at her back; but to lift up the voice in her behalf when she stands alone, or is hooted by the crowd—to bear contempt for her patiently,—this requires strong convictions and a sincere heart. This was Sydney Smith's choice. Had he been content to shout with the multitude, or even to hold his tongue instead of exposing corruption and ignorance, he need not have struggled with poverty so long. It is true he differed from most men who are in advance of their age, in living to see the triumph of his principles, and the introduction of those reforms for which he had so long contended almost hopelessly. That, however, was merely incidental, and not what he could have hoped for or foreseen when he chose his course. If his public career was thus honourable, his private life was no less commendable. There is no better mark of a sound, strong mind, than to go through the

little commonplace duties of life thoroughly, cheerfully, so as to make all a part of ourselves, and leave our stamp upon them. We have seen how well Sydney did this—making excellent jokes, too, over his hard work. There was no meanness or moral carelessness about him; in every dealing with his brotherman he was most accurate and just. Good, kind, and thoughtfully affectionate in the bosom of his family, his servants respected him as truly as his noblest friends. The world, judging by his wit, thought him careless or reckless; but nothing could be further from the truth. His wife, who knew him best, said, “People are not aware that Sydney, with all his mirth, is one of the most cautious, prudent men that ever existed; he is always looking forward and providing against what may happen.” He said himself, “I sometimes dine with Mr Blank, and the head of the family sits at the foot of the table, looking so attentive, and bowing so obsequiously; and when I talk humorously, as I am apt to do, I see by his expression that he says to himself, ‘There is a man I would not lend money to at fifteen per cent.; he’s a rash man; he would buy bad Exchequer bills; he is not to be trusted.’ He little knows me.” It was the same laughter-loving but acute man who said, “If you want to make much of a small income, always ask yourself these two questions: first, ‘Do I really want it?’ secondly, ‘Can I do without it?’ These

two questions, answered honestly, will double your fortune."

Sydney Smith had no pretensions to rank in the first class as a profound thinker and original genius. He was rather fitted to diffuse and render intelligible and practical the thoughts of others, and, by his wit, logic, and eloquence, to impress these on the general mind. As a thinker, he was most distinguished for the possession of a strong, practical understanding, that grasped, with true Saxon energy, the realities of earth and time. With mere dreams and abstractions he had no patience; cloudland he left to visionaries. "Never teach false morality," he said. "How exquisitely absurd to tell girls that beauty is of no value—dress of no use! Beauty is of value; her whole prospects and happiness in life may often depend on a new gown or a becoming bonnet; and if she has five grains of common sense, she will find this out. The great thing is to teach her their just value, and that there must be something better under the bonnet than a pretty face for real happiness. But never sacrifice truth." Of a hard-headed utilitarian he said, "If you were to bore holes in him with a gimlet, I am convinced sawdust would come out of him." "If everything is to be sacrificed to utility, why do you bury your grandmother at all; why don't you cut her up into small pieces at once, and make portable soup of her?" Nothing gave him greater plea-

sure, when he met with a specimen of that dull class who are incapable of understanding a joke, than to play on this peculiarity. One of these dull mortals was seated at the same dinner-table with him on one occasion ; Sydney remarked that "though he was not generally considered illiberal, yet he must confess he had one little weakness, one secret wish—he should like to roast a Quaker." "Good gracious ! Mr Smith," said his dull neighbour, full of horror, "roast a Quaker !" "Yes, sir," said Sydney, with the greatest gravity, "roast a Quaker." "But do you consider, Mr Smith, the torture?" "Yes, sir," said Sydney, "I have considered everything ; it may be wrong, as you say, the Quaker would undoubtedly suffer acutely, but every one has his tastes—mine would be to roast a Quaker ; one would satisfy me—only one ; but it is one of those peculiarities I have striven against in vain, and I hope you will pardon my weakness." The whole company were in roars of laughter, but so entirely impenetrable to a joke was this gentleman's head, that he sat full of horror, and seemed inclined to fly from such a dangerous character. A Mrs Jackson called on him one day. She belonged to the same genus ; and among other things spoke of the oppressive heat of last week. "Heat, madam," said Sydney ; "it was so dreadful here that I found there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones." "Take off your flesh and sit

in your bones, sir! O Mr Smith, how could you do that?" she exclaimed, with the utmost gravity. "Nothing more easy, ma'am; come and see next time." "But," he said, "she ordered her carriage, and evidently thought it a very unorthodox proceeding."

What a mixture of wit and good sense there is in the following description of a nice person, which he threw off carelessly on one occasion:—"A nice person is neither too tall nor too short, looks clean and cheerful, has no prominent feature, makes no difficulties, is never misplaced, is never foolishly affronted, and is void of affectations. There is something in the very air of a nice person which inspires you with confidence, makes you talk, and talk without fear of malicious misrepresentations; you feel that you are reposing on a nature which God has made kind, and created for the benefit and happiness of society. It has the effect on the mind which soft air and a fine climate has upon the body. If anybody is wanted for a party, a nice person is the first thought of; when the child is christened—when the daughter is married—all the joys of life are communicable to nice people. A nice person never knocks over wine or melted butter—does not tread upon the dog's foot, or molest the family cat—eats soup without noise—laughs in the right place—and has a watchful and attentive eye." "Ah!" he said, "what female heart can withstand a red coat? I think this should be a

part of female education ; it is much neglected. As you have a rocking-horse to accustom them to ride, I would have military dolls in the nursery to harden their hearts against officers and red coats." Everett, the distinguished American statesman and orator, said, " The first remark I made to myself, after listening to Mr Sydney Smith's conversation, was that if he had not been known as the wittiest man of his day, he would have been accounted one of the wisest." Then his wit, as some one said, " always had the *dew* upon it,"—it was so fresh and enlivening. It had no coarseness or buffoonery—no venom or cruelty—but was as sunny and tender as the man himself. " You have been laughing at me constantly, Sydney," said Lord Dudley, " for the last seven years, and yet, in all that time, you never said a single thing to me that I wished unsaid." " It is quite extraordinary," said one of his friends, " how different every word that drops from Sydney's pen is from anything else in the world. Individuality is stamped on every sentence, and you can hardly read a page without coming to some sentence that no other man could have written. It was the same with his conversation." Here are a few of his conversational flashes: " Oh, don't tell me of facts; I never believe facts. You know Canning said nothing was so fallacious as facts, except figures." " I agree with Sir James Mackintosh, and have found the world

more good and more foolish than I thought when young." "Ah, you always detect a little of the Irish fossil, the potato, peeping out in an Irishman." Talking of Mrs —, "She has not very clear ideas about the tides. I remember at a large party her insisting that it was always high-tide at London Bridge at twelve o'clock. She referred to me, 'Now, Mr Smith, is it not so?' I answered, 'It used to be so, I believe, formerly, but perhaps the lord mayor and aldermen have altered it lately.'" "Mr — once came to see us in Yorkshire; and he was so small and so active, he looked exactly like a little spirit running about in a kind of undress, without a body." "People complain of their servants; I never had a bad one; but then I study their comforts, that is one recipe for securing good servants." "O'Connel presented me to the Irish members as the powerful and entertaining advocate of the Irish Catholic claims." "Oh, the Dean of — deserves to be preached to death by wild curates." "Yes; — was merry, not wise. You know a man of small understanding is merry where he can, not where he should. Lightning must, I think, be the wit of heaven." Speaking of a French revolutionist, "No man, I fear, can effect great benefits for his country without some sacrifice of the minor virtues." "If you want to improve your understanding drink coffee. Sir James Mackintosh used to say he believed the difference

between one man and another was produced by the quantity of coffee he drank." "Luttrell used to say, 'I hate the sight of monkeys, they remind me so of poor relations.'" "Oh, they were all so beautiful, that Paris could not have decided between them, but would have cut his apple in slices." "It is a curious fact that the peasantry in England apply the masculine and feminine gender to things, like the French. My schoolmistress here, a very respectable young woman, hurt her leg. I inquired how it was the other day. She answered *he* was very bad, and gave her a deal of trouble at night. I inquired who, in some surprise, and found it was her leg." Some one mentioned that a young Scotchman of his acquaintance was going to marry an Irish widow, double his age, and of considerable dimensions. "Going to marry her!" he exclaimed, "impossible! You mean a part of her—he could not marry her all himself. It would be a case, not of bigamy, but of trigamy. There is enough of her to furnish wives for a whole parish. One man marry her!—it is monstrous. You might people a colony with her—or give an assembly with her—or take your morning's walk round her—or read the riot act and disperse her, or do anything with her but marry her." "I am a great doctor," he said to a lady on a visit to him, "would you like to hear some of my medicines? Well, there is 'The Gentlejog'—a pleasure to take it; 'The Bull-dog,' for more

serious cases ; ‘ Peter’s Puke ’ ; ‘ Heart’s Delight,’ the comfort of all the old women in the parish ; ‘ Rub-a-dub,’ a capital embrocation ; ‘ Dead-stop ’ settles the matter at once ; ‘ Up-with-it-then ’ needs no explanation ; and so on.”

The nature of the man led him to view things on the ludicrous side ; and we have no right to quarrel with him for doing so. If he uttered so many good and wise things in a pleasant, humorous way, why get angry because he did not utter them in a dull, unpleasant way ? Many people say a large endowment of the humorous faculty is dangerous, and so it is ; but so is a great intellect, or any other great endowment, inasmuch as, if abused, it does more mischief. It is only mediocrity that is safe ; it is only dulness that can be trusted. But are we to vote for ignorance and stupidity on this account ? A fallen angel becomes a devil ; but is the existence of angels dangerous or undesirable on this account ? No man was ever possessed of great wit who abused it less than Sydney Smith. To have forbidden him to express himself humorously would have been to clip the wings of the eagle.

Many good persons are prejudiced against Sydney on account of the course he took in reference to missions to the heathen, when they were first projected. In his earlier years, he wrote against the attempts, then commenced, to Christianise India, in the pages

of the *Edinburgh Review*; and no doubt his articles contain some harsh, unjust, and bitter statements against the originators and supporters of missions. This has been remembered against him when the many good things he did were forgotten; and to this day it is frequently brought forward on platforms as an accusation against him,—not always, I fear, in the most Christian spirit. I have no desire to palliate or deny the error into which Sydney fell in this respect; but I ask you to consider calmly the circumstances. Fifty or sixty years ago, modern missions to the heathen originated. Like all other good things, they were at first in a minority of half-a-dozen. The few earnest men who first broached the subject were regarded as madmen, or crack-brained enthusiasts. Statesmen, Churchmen, Dissenters, Presbyterians, all decried the project as wild and visionary. It was supposed that the safety of our Indian empire was imperilled; that the Hindoos would rise in rebellion if their religion were interfered with. The press and the pulpit denounced the whole affair as fanaticism. It was when such ideas were current that Sydney Smith wrote the article in the *Edinburgh Review* entitled “India Missions;” and unhappily he fell into the popular view, and spoke ill of a noble undertaking. But this only proves that he was human, and shared in the prejudices of his age, which were strongly against any manifestations

of religious enthusiasm. I think the matter should not be remembered against him now, for he lived to see and admit his error. In Mrs Stowe's "Sunny Memories," she mentions that, when in conversation with Macaulay, she put forward the staple accusation against Sydney Smith, his friend vindicated him by saying that he lived to change his mind entirely in regard to missions. I find this confirmed by what his daughter says in her Memoir. Some one having in his presence attempted to ridicule missions, he dissented, saying, "that though all was not done that was projected, or even boasted of, yet that much good resulted; and that wherever Christianity was taught, it brought with it the additional good of civilisation in its train, and men became better carpenters, better cultivators, better everything." I submit that an error that has been confessed and renounced should not be made the ground of accusation against a man. No admirer of Sydney Smith would pretend that he was immaculate—that he had not his faults and failings like other men. At times he allowed himself to treat serious subjects too jocosely, though this was rarely the case; and was in a few instances unjust to some whose religious sentiments he did not comprehend; yet rarely did he violate his own excellent principle, that "piety and honesty are always venerable, with whatever degree of error they happen to be connected." But, then,

what is to become of the best of men, if you judge them by their faults and failings? It is easy enough to discover flaws and imperfections in a man; but the real question is, What good is in him? with what amount of "veracity" and honest endeavour is he struggling against the evil, and battling towards the true and good? what is his life-purpose? Tried by this rule, the verdict must be entirely favourable to Sydney Smith. And then, in regard to some severe things he has written about certain manifestations of religious zeal, let us remember that we are bound to inquire, in all cases, whether those signs we discover spring from spiritual health or disease; whether they arise from a disordered body and brain, or from right thinking and feeling in religion; whether they spring from true piety or superstition. We know well that truly pious and noble souls do fall into these diseased manifestations, and that we must separate these from them, and fling them aside, ere we can discover and reverence the divine heroism of the men. With many of the deeper and more terrible spirit-struggles through which some have to pass, Sydney Smith, from temperament and training, was unable to sympathise; but I believe, whether right or wrong in his conclusions, he only attacked what he believed to be unfavourable to piety, and the offspring of fanaticism.

LECTURE THE NINTH.

OUR MOTHER-AGE; OR, THE TIMES WE LIVE IN.

EVERY age has its distinguishing peculiarities, by which it is marked off from all others. The great ideas that move humanity, the thoughts that shake mankind and determine the course of events, the hopes and fears, the wants and aspirations of men, vary from age to age ; and the outward manifestations of these—the institutions, arts, sciences, and religions, embodying and expressing these, present a corresponding variety. Ultimately everything rests on an idea ; thought is the force that really moves humanity, and rules the world. All our laws, political and social institutions, customs, and transactions have originally sprung from thoughts surging in the minds of men, and finally taking these outward forms and embodiments. The seen is but the bodying forth of the unseen. This great universe is a realised thought

of the Divine mind. In human affairs, the invisible force of thought, working below the surface, has given birth to all we see around us. As men's ideas change, so do their habits, institutions, efforts, and environments. Thought, therefore, is the great ruling power of the world. In estimating any age, if we would go below the surface, we must ascertain what are the thoughts, feelings, and wants that sway men's minds—what are the central ideas that make vital and mould the present time ; for, whatever conflicting influences are at work, these determine the character of any particular age. Now, all history tells us, that though, since man took his place on this planet, there are certain human characteristics common to all ages and races, yet that each age has certain individual features peculiar to itself, and distinguishing it from others. There are thoughts and tendencies common to humanity ; yet no two ages are the same in the real or relative strength of their unseen forces. Change is the great regulating law of God's universe. Humanity is on the march, pursuing some mighty development, working towards some great end. The present is not a repetition of the past ; but either an advance on it, or something different from it, whether for better or worse. Our age is something individual and original. The nineteenth century is not the ninth. The thoughts that are heaving humanity's bosom now, and making its great heart throb tumult-

tuously, are not the thoughts of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. It may be profitable, then, to take a brief glance at a few of the more striking tendencies and characteristics of our times—at some of the peculiarities of that evolution of humanity we name “Our Mother-Age”—the age that has produced us, and in which we live and have our being.

In judging of our age, we should beware of separating it from the ages that have gone before. To isolate the present time from the past, would be to misunderstand it. The age we live in is the product of all the centuries that have flitted over the earth since man’s existence commenced. We are truly—

“Heirs of all the ages,
In the foremost files of time.”

For us all previous generations have been toiling; they laboured, and we have entered into their labours—their rich bequest of thought, effort, and experience. Not in vain have they lived and died. Their labours produced the present, which is the surface-growth from the whole buried past. The Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, all lie buried in the silence of the tomb; but whatever of the true and good they achieved has not perished. It is possessed of a charmed life—is perennial, and lives in the present. Many of our laws, institutions, and modes of life, traced to their roots, would be found to have grown up originally on the banks of the Tigris or Nile, in

sunny Greece, or under the blue skies of Italy. The buried past, therefore, lives in the present ; and in a thousand unsuspected ways moulds and influences it. The present age is a confluence of many rills, having their origin in the distant hill-tops of the past. Our ancestors have been our benefactors, painfully toiling and laying up for their children. Humanity has a life as truly as the individual ; every part is connected with every other, and all form one great whole. We cannot separate ourselves from those who have trod the earth before us. As friends and brothers, they are connected with us by the closest ties. Only a shallow or ignorant mind, therefore, will despise the past. To all true souls it shines in the dim moonlight of memory, "sad and yet holy." Shall we treat contemptuously that which has been bedewed with human tears, fashioned by the sweat of a brother's brow or brain, hallowed by prayers, and consecrated by the joys and sorrows of our dead kindred ? In the pride of our own achievements, let us never look at the past with other than reverential feelings. But at the same time let us never live in slavish subjection to the past—never convert it into a superstition, by fancying it something vast and wonderful, that can never be reached or surpassed, by which we are to model ourselves, without the hope of outstripping its excellence. Whatever the past may have been, we cannot recall it, and we cannot live by

it. It has been resolved into its elements, and these have entered into new combinations, and formed the new era. As well might we attempt to recall the tertiary period of the geologist, as the first, or fifteenth, or eighteenth century of the Christian era. It is a puerile absurdity to array ourselves in the cast-off clothes of a former age, and fancy we are living its life over again. Its thoughts, feelings, views, and wants cannot be ours, and we are only masqueraders in wearing its garments. There is evident, in our own day, in certain quarters, an extreme tendency to worship the past, to throw contempt on the present, and to go back to some buried age as an exemplar. But it is all in vain to attempt arraying the nineteenth century in mediæval garments. They do not fit, and only render the wearers ridiculous. The attempt may appear very reverential, but it is only flying from one extreme to another—from the shallow self-conceit that would glorify the present and regard the past as contemptible, to an abject surrender of ourselves to the past as an authority and infallible guide. It is neither wise nor manlike. We must aim at living our own life and doing our own work bravely and well. Whatever the past may have been, we are to aim at making the present something nobler and better. The riches of the past are ours, not to waste as prodigals, not to gloat over as misers, but to use as invested capital, and transmit to the future as

an enlarged sum. The course of humanity is not like that of a pendulum, perpetually traversing the same arc of a circle ; but like that of the inrolling tide—at times apparently receding and beaten back, but really gaining a little with every fresh wave, and finally reaching the highest attainable level. The golden age is before us, not behind us.

“ Then courage ! let us love the True,
Accept as God’s best gift the Real,
Not only should we think, but do ;
Life blossoms now with the ideal,
And our Romance shall be the real.

“ Then, O my brothers, trust and love,
A golden country lies before us ;
With man around us, God above,
And truth and beauty doming o’er us,
A golden country gleams before us.”

It is because we have faith in an All-wise plan on which the universe has been constructed—faith in a Divine purpose working towards a glorious end—faith in God and man—that we anticipate a brighter futurity for humanity. Whatever else may desert us, “ Hope, the charmer, lingers still behind.” Gleams of sunshine, too, are not wanting to cheer our path—glimpses of the far-off land of promise towards which humanity is marching. When the lion-hearted Columbus was sailing towards the West through an unexplored waste of waters, with the black billows threatening to engulf him, and cowardly, mutinous seamen ready to rise and fling him overboard, all was dark

around ; but the little star of faith and hope shone brightly in the brave man's heart. And at length there came floating around his little bark some weeds, leaves, and flowers, telling him that the land he had dreamed of was a reality, and that he was drawing near to its shores. Ah, how welcome to the drooping heart those little harbingers of victory,—those first-fruits of the land of promise,—floated to him on the dark waves of the Atlantic ! And by and by a flock of strange bright birds fluttered around the lonely vessel and alighted on its mast-heads, like angels of hope beckoning him onward. So with ourselves, in the midst of turmoils, storms, and darkness, there come floating towards us intimations of that bright and beautiful land to which Providence is conducting our race.

To begin with the more obvious and striking features of our age: even the least-informed are aware that it is distinguished from all preceding ages by great scientific discoveries, and, as a consequence, surpasses all others in the application of mechanism to human purposes. The proofs of this meet the eye on every hand ; the benefits are felt by all classes—in palace and hovel alike. We point triumphantly to the modern railroad, gradually covering the civilised world with its iron network, opening up the luxuriant plains of India in the East, and startling the forest solitudes of the “ Far West ” with the shriek of its

rushing locomotive—linking together cities, countries, and nations into one great commonwealth of interests and brotherhood of ideas. We point to the electric telegraph, stretching side by side with the railroad, bearing the thoughts of men on the lightning's pinion—flashing them across broad continents, under the bed of mighty rivers, through the dread solitude of ocean's caves, over hill and plain, with a rapidity that cannot be measured. Or we turn to the steam-driven fleets that cover the ocean, proudly defying the storm-king, breasting the adverse billows and dashing them aside as playthings, bridging the ocean and annihilating distance. We point to the great mechanical triumphs of our day—such as the iron tube along which a railway train shoots across the mighty St Lawrence; or, as in the case of the Menai and Britannia tubular bridges, leaps a broad arm of the sea. We turn to some of the huge manufactories, where the Nasmyth hammer, wielded by the giant arm of steam, forges the enormous machinery that is to do the work of thousands of hands, or fashions the ponderous anchors that are to enable the leviathans of the deep that guard the coasts of England to ride out the hurricane. We might easily swell our list of scientific trophies lately won, by enumerating the production of a light from electricity rivalling almost the sun's brilliancy, and the marvels of the photographic art. These are discoveries and inven-

tions that have been made within the memory of living men,—some of them are but of yesterday,—and they stamp a distinctive character upon our era, and will make it memorable to all coming generations. Ultimately they will revolutionise society, elevate the condition of all races of mankind, and immensely enlarge the physical and intellectual enjoyment of every inhabitant of earth. They can never be lost to our race; and the vast improvements they are rapidly spreading will stretch away into the coming centuries, and tell beneficially on unborn myriads.

Looking at these achievements of science, have we not reason to feel proud of our age? We begin to see what transcendent powers have been intrusted to man, by the Creator, for the benefit of the race. Material nature is becoming obedient to human genius—revealing her secrets—yielding up her forces as man's servants, and ministering to his happiness and advancement. Can we doubt that all these indicate progress, and point to a brighter future for humanity? Take the steam-engine, which we may regard as a type of this age of iron, and consider some of its results. In Britain alone it is doing the work of many millions of men; in the factory, driving myriads of spinning-jennies; clothing a large portion of the human family; dragging up the treasures of the mine; cutting and rolling huge masses of iron into the required shapes; boring the Armstrong gun;

polishing the delicate hair-spring of a watch with an accuracy unattainable by human manipulation ; working up the beggar's cast-off rags into the pure sheet of paper ; and by the printing-press stamping on this sheet, with inconceivable rapidity, the thoughts with which the brain is throbbing at this moment, and then scattering them over the earth. This "iron missionary" is carrying multitudes in an hour as far as they could have once gone in a day, after terrible toils and sufferings. Everywhere it is lightening man's toil. The weaver drops his shuttle ; iron fingers ply it with a hundred-fold rapidity. The seaman furls his sail ; a snorting sea-horse does his bidding, and bears him over the waves. Can we doubt that the design of the beneficent Creator, in permitting such inventions, is to free man from grinding and degrading toil, and give him time for the culture of his nobler powers ? While engaged in a struggle for very existence, man's whole powers are absorbed in providing for his animal wants, and improvement is almost impossible. But our great, patient, broad-shouldered servant, steam, steps in, abridges the hours of human labour, performs all the drudgery, and thus liberates man for higher pursuits in the world of intellect, and gives to the masses the prospect of being able to develop their nobler nature. This seems to be the merciful design of Providence ; and, in spite of selfish avarice, the toiling millions

will yet reap the benefit. And when we see the excursion train carrying by thousands the toilers of the great city far away from the din and smoke, into some of the sweetest and loveliest scenes of rural beauty, that they may there breathe for an hour the free untainted air, thus breaking the dreadful monotony of their existence, and affording them a taste of those pure pleasures God has provided for all, we have a foretaste of the benefits that will yet inevitably follow.

“ Blessings on Science, and her handmaid, Steam,
They make Utopia only half a dream ;
And shew the fervour of capacious souls,
Who watch the ball of progress as it rolls,
That all as yet completed or begun
Is but the dawning that precedes the sun.”

Nothing shews us more strikingly the importance of these discoveries than the projects for the future they are already giving rise to. In fact, no human mind can predict the result of a great thought, once it is struck out. How little did Columbus anticipate what was to follow, when the shores of the New World first gladdened his eyes! How little could Faust foresee the results, when the idea of movable types entered his brain! When Professor Dersted of Copenhagen first saw the little needle vibrate under the wire of a voltaic battery, and thus was led to the discovery of electro-magnetism, could he have looked into the future, he would have seen the instantaneous

transmission of thought over the world springing from this apparently insignificant fact. Consider the gigantic projects that are now before the world in connexion with the electric telegraph. Newfoundland was, for a few days, linked to Europe by the electric wire laid along the bed of the Atlantic ; and though the connexion was speedily severed, the year 1865 will doubtless witness a more successful experiment to bind together the Old World and the New. Already New York is joined by the wire to San Francisco ; and Calcutta will soon be able to whisper to London. Once the Atlantic Telegraph is completed, Bombay can transmit a message, *viâ* England, to San Francisco. It is impossible to predict the results that this seemingly insignificant ligature, the electric wire, is destined to work out. Already, generals are commanding their armies by electricity ; and the result of every charge in the American conflict is flashed over the States before the smoke has cleared away, though it must be admitted the message is not always in accordance with facts, and requires generally subsequent correction. In the pursuits of peace, the electric telegraph is working out beneficial results. Railway travelling is rendered much more secure than formerly ; trains are warned of danger, or speedily assisted in case of need. Hurricanes and tornadoes travel more slowly than the electric message along a line of coast ; so that their

approach is made known before they are felt, and preparation made to resist them ; ships are forewarned not to put to sea, or trains to start till the tempest has spent its fury. So beneficent are all these discoveries of science. Improvements will follow of which we cannot now form a conception. It is true we cannot have a swifter messenger than electricity ; but facilities for transmitting messages may be vastly multiplied. In the year 1840, with the exception of the old clumsy wooden telegraphs, there was no means of transmitting intelligence swifter than a horse could gallop ; and that could have been done as quickly, or even more so, in the days of Job. In 1850 the lightning was the courier ; so that, in ten years, we cleared the vast space between the speed of a horse and the speed of lightning. What may not another century achieve ? Thus much we see to be possible—these advantages may be cheapened and brought within the reach of all classes ; so that, “in the good time coming,” friend will be talking to friend, though half the globe separates them.

If I should attempt enumerating the other triumphs of science which our age has witnessed, I should weary you. Astronomy has immensely extended her conquests, and proudly points to that great eye, six feet in diameter, which Lord Rosse has turned to search the depths of space. She points to a still greater

triumph—the discovery of the planet Neptune: not made out like the others by the eye in casually ranging the heavens, but demonstrated first by mathematical calculations to be in existence, and even its locality ascertained, before the telescope lighted on it. Our age has also witnessed the rise and rapid growth of an entirely new science—that of geology, whose revelations exceed in marvellousness all that the wildest imagination had conceived, and cast new light on the history of our earth. The recent discovery entitled “The Mechanical or Dynamical Theory of Heat,” which points to the conclusion that heat, light, electricity, and magnetism are but expressions, in different languages, of one great power, and that they are mutually convertible, so that a certain quantity of one form may be made to produce a given quantity of another form, has quite upset the old doctrine of heat. It is now known that heat is only a peculiar condition of matter, “a vibration of its ultimate particles;” and that the destruction or creation of energy in the world is just as impossible as the creation or destruction of matter itself. Great results will flow from this beautiful disclosure of one of nature’s great truths. Chemistry, too, has its discoveries of incalculable value. It has taught us to multiply the productions of the soil many fold, and is revealing the wondrous laws of the material creation. Physio-

logy is investigating the structure of animated existences—teaching the causes of disease, the means of restoring and preserving health, and thus lengthening human life. We grow weary of wandering as we range over modern scientific discoveries. We are afraid to utter the word “impossible,” and would exclude it from the language. The feat of jumping down our own throats was thought, in times of ignorance, an impossibility; but science shews that we are doing it every day. The food we swallow becomes part of our bodies—of bone, nerve, and muscle; the old substance meantime passing away continually. In this way, in the course of seven years, we swallow the food which makes an entirely new body, and literally jump down our own throats.

It is perhaps in part owing to these scientific advances and mechanical triumphs, with their consequent changes, present and prospective, that another notable tendency of our times shews itself so strongly: our age is restless, clamorous for change, impatient of existing evils, and careless regarding the past. It may be our vast scientific progress that has taught us to despise former ages and distrust “the wisdom of our ancestors.” Whatever be the cause, the temper of the age is inclined to look with contempt on the past, to abandon old methods, and strike out new and daring experiments. Hence antiquity now is no passport to favour. However

venerable by age, every institution seems doomed to undergo a searching investigation, and, if found wanting, to be irreverently hurled to the dust. The young spirit of the age professes to be impatient with the thin conventionalities and respectabilities of society, and clamorous for facts and realities, for sunlight and pure air. Hence its tone is somewhat supercilious and cynical, its temper sceptical, and its efforts destructive. It names its enemies "Philistines"—foes of the chosen people, the children of light. Those who are imbued with the modern spirit say, what was good for a past era will not do for the new day that has dawned upon us; we cannot live at second-hand, cannot get on by tradition; we, too, have minds and hearts of our own; heaven is doming over us, the children of the nineteenth century, even as of old, and we must think and act for ourselves; we must look into the heart of matters, and examine old dogmas, opinions, and systems. The consequence of all this is that, without cherishing many positive convictions on social, political, or moral subjects, the young spirit of the times has strong destructive tendencies. The waster has come; the work of the pickaxe has begun; the builder, with trowel and hammer, to erect the new, has yet to appear.

I do not reckon this by any means the most beautiful feature of our times; still it may be indispensable as a transitional stage of affairs, and is not

without its hopeful symptoms. The ruins must be pulled down, and the rubbish removed, before the new building can rise. At times, an old, filthy, death-breeding quarter of a town has to be purified by fire; and though the spectacle is not pleasant, and the danger to what is really good considerable, yet nothing would be effectual but the fire. So when mankind have outgrown the old methods, and feel the stirrings of a new spirit within, an age of destruction arrives, when rough democrats, as the demolishers, get the upper hand. But let us comfort ourselves with the reflection, that—

“ ’Tis but the ruin of the bad,
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate’er of good the old time had
Is living still.”

The conflagration will exhaust itself in due time. The dust-cloud around the destructives will roll away. A brighter era will come. Society cannot live by destruction; when the old is removed, the new will come forth clear and radiant. What an age of corruption and moral death was that when the huge Roman Empire tumbled into pieces! The Goth, Vandal, and Hun, like beasts of prey, scented the carrion from afar, and never was there such a period of utter devastation and ruin. But out of that weltering chaos a new cosmos arose, and the present industrial scientific era has been evolved from the

wreck. In fact, everything around us seems to get on by a balance of antagonistic forces—by a sort of tacit compromise. The earth keeps its orbit so steadily in virtue of two opposing forces—the centrifugal and centripetal—that balance one another, and establish a physical compromise. All our existing continents and islands hold their place under the influence of the upheaving and degrading forces acting in contrary directions. So, too, society holds together in virtue of the balance between the conservative and radical tendencies of human nature. All ages, past and present, have been, or are, marked by these two antagonistic principles. The conservative takes his stand upon the past, and trusts to the ascertained and realised. “This method,” he says, “has worked well in times past. Our forefathers found it sufficient ; why should we not go by it in all time to come ?” He shrinks from the untried, and dreads innovation and experiment. He has got hold of a partial truth. The radical, on the other hand, says, “Away with the old ; the world has done with it ; we want something better ; we must have progress.” His motto is “Go ahead ;” that of the former, “Halt and hold.” The one is of the past, the other of the future. Each system is partially true ; between their antagonistic influences society moves on well. Were we to fall under the entire government of the conservative principle, we should become Chinese, and cease to

improve ; were we wholly moved by the radical principle, we should be mere revolutionists, breaking and burning. Nature is wiser than either—strikes a balance, and society is guided along the safe middle path.

If, then, our age is tormented with doubts, fretful, restless, questioning all things, grasping at changes, yet without established convictions or a centre of unity ; if democracy is abroad, with noisy demonstrations and clamourings for advance, let us understand that change is needed ; and, if rightly understood, there is nothing alarming in this. Fearful wrongs and abuses exist ; is it not hopeful when society awakes and cries for their removal ? These impatient cries give promise of a brighter day ; and assure us that the evil is not irremediable. Tennyson strikes a responsive chord in many a brave young heart, when he sings,—

“ Not in vain the distance beacons, forward, forward let us range ;
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day ;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

“ Mother-Age, (for mine I knew not,) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the
sun—

Oh ! I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set,
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.”

Beyond all doubt, the promise of our age is bright ; though it is very far indeed from perfection. These very throes and convulsions that startle so many,

rightly considered, are hopeful. They indicate the struggle that is going on between new and old ideas—between the moving forces of the strong young era that is, and the worn-out institutions of the past. Deep, earnest thoughts are heaving the great heart of humanity, and they must find expression. The worst features of any age are apathy, contented ignorance, want of self-reliance, or moral despair. Beyond all question, our age is self-sufficing to an extreme, self-confident in boundless measure ; conscious of great wants and fearful moral diseases, and resolute in seeking a remedy. All these indicate vitality, energy, progress. Of that moral stagnation that indicates death, we see no symptoms. In fact, the banner of our time bears the aspiring device, “Excelsior.” Whatever be its faults and shortcomings, at all events its spirit is earnest and urgent for action. It cries out for real work—for practical issues. Its “Psalm of Life” is—

“ Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us further than to-day.

“ Trust no future, howe’er pleasant ;
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act, act in the living Present !
Heart within and God o’erhead.

“ Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”

The spirit of the age may, therefore, be fairly described as practical, earnest, hopeful. Sentimental dreams it discards ; present duty it preaches ; hopeful expectation it ceaselessly inculcates. All this seems to clothe the future in promise. We may, without any tinge of Utopianism, expect that the future will see humanity carried to higher levels—will witness many cruel wrongs swept away, and the introduction of “sweeter manners, purer laws.” The real dreamers are those who obstinately cling to the past, and oppose advance. They are vainly opposing themselves to the laws of the universe ; for the whole history of the past tells of progress. All noble souls, in every age,—prophets, poets, lords of thoughts,—have cherished a belief in human progress as their dearest faith ; and have accepted the onward march of humanity on earth as a pledge and foretaste of endless progress in the skies. That belief, I think, is deeper and stronger now than ever. The hope of “a good time coming” is cheering many a weary spirit in the dusty highways of life. The gladdening notes of the song of hope are penetrating dingy workshop and busy factory, lonely cottage and crowded court and lane ; and pale labour lifts its weary head, and a flush of expectation mantles the pale cheek. Is not the night far spent and the day at hand ? Are not these the roseate tints of morning in the eastern sky ?

“ Darkness wanes, behold the light!
Waken, brothers, and unite!
Waken and behold the dawn!
See the eternal morning rise!
And beneath the opening skies,
Waving forest, gleaming lawn,
Of returning Paradise !”

Without dwelling on what many would reckon the imaginative aspects of our subject, we might easily convince the most matter-of-fact mortals that our age has great and substantial improvements to exhibit; and that as far as comfort, convenience, and the means of smoothing existence go, it is a much pleasanter age to live in than any of those that have preceded it. We are always discontented with the present; and perhaps it is best so. Discontent is the parent of all improvement. For the privilege of grumbling, a Briton will die as readily as for Magna Charta. But let any subject of Queen Victoria, possessed of a proper British appreciation of the comforts and respectabilities of life, compare the present age with any one of its predecessors, and then say whether he would wish to have been born in an earlier period of the world's history. Would he, for example, prefer to have seen the light in the ancient city of Nineveh, so as to have had a hand in chiselling those winged bulls, and hauling them to their pedestals? We admire the grand old pyramids of Egypt; but, at the same time, we may be very well satisfied they were constructed before our day. Or, taking

a great leap over the intervening centuries, need we envy those who had the felicity of living under the sceptre of Queen Anne, when England had no roads, and when Prince George of Denmark, making a visit to the Duke of Somerset, had to employ relays of labourers to lift his coach with poles out of the various ruts and quagmires of the way, and spent six hours in getting over the last nine miles of his journey? In fact, the sentimental talk of many about the "good old times" is sheer absurdity. Had they been born in those dear departed times, they would have found them very different from the image which their imagination has constructed. Just think of having been cast upon the world before the days of tea and toast; before the invention of carpets, umbrellas, clean shirts, braces, and india-rubber coats and shoes! The last-named articles alone will, when generally used, lengthen human life considerably. Fancy a world without a newspaper or magazine; without the penny-post, railway, or telegraph! How did people live before turnips or potatoes were grown; before the non-inebriating stimulants that now make our tables cheerful and fragrant came into use? Unhappy ancestors, tealess and bathless, with your beer, heavy bread, unbraced breeches, damp feet, and miry roads, we envy you not! In his "History of England," Macaulay says, "It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were

destitute of comforts, the want of which would be intolerable to a modern footman—when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves, the very sight of which would raise a riot in a modern workhouse—when men died faster in the purest country air than they now do in the most pestilential lanes of our towns—and when they died faster in our towns than they now do on the coast of Guinea.” Sydney Smith thus sums up, in his own graphic and humorous manner, the improvements that had taken place in his lifetime: “It is of some importance at what period a man is born. A young man, alive at this period, hardly knows to what improvements of human life he has been introduced. I would bring before his notice the following eighteen changes which have taken place in England since I first began to breathe in it the breath of life—a period amounting now to nearly seventy-three years. Gas was unknown. I groped about the streets of London in all but the utter darkness of a twinkling oil-lamp, under the protection of watchmen in their grand climacteric, and exposed to every species of depredation and insult. In going from Taunton to Bath, I suffered between ten and twelve thousand severe contusions, before stone-breaking Macadam was born. I paid £15 in a single year for repairs of carriage-springs broken on the pavement of London ; I now glide, without noise or fracture, on wooden pavements. I can walk, by the assistance of

the police, from one end of London to the other, without molestation; or, if tired, get into a cheap and active cab, instead of those cottages on wheels, which the hackney coaches were at the beginning of my life. I had no umbrella. They were little used, and very dear. There were no water-proof hats; and my hat has often been reduced by rains into its primitive pulp. I could not keep my small-clothes in their proper place, for braces were unknown. If I had the gout, there was no colchicum. If I were bilious, there was no calomel. If I were attacked by ague, there was no quinine. Quarrels about uncommuted tithes were endless. The corruption of Parliament, before reform, infamous. There were no banks to receive the savings of the poor. The poor-laws were gradually sapping the vitals of the country; and whatever miseries I suffered, I had no post to whisk my complaints, for a single penny, to the remotest corners of the empire;—and yet, in spite of all these privations, I lived on quietly, and am now ashamed that I was not more discontented, and utterly surprised that all these changes and inventions did not occur two centuries ago. I forgot to add, that as the basket of stage-coaches, in which luggage was then carried, had no springs, your clothes were rubbed to pieces; and that even in the best society, one-third of the gentlemen, at least, were always drunk.”

On the whole, then, we may fairly conclude that

there is a rhythm in human history; that we are not merely marching and countermarching; that there is more than mere endless creation and destruction; that there is real advance, and a gradual elevation to nobler heights. I have dwelt hitherto on what is bright and hopeful in our age; but I am not ignorant that the picture has its dark shadows. Our Mother-Age presents many saddening and some threatening symptoms. The millennium—prophecies to the contrary, notwithstanding—must still be a long way off. Terrible evils afflict our modern society. While we have much outward material civilisation, and great advances in science, in art, in the general comforts of life, how slow is our moral progress! It cannot be denied that great dangers threaten our modern civilisation, or rather semi-civilisation. These dangers do not preach despair, but they emphatically cry, “All hands to work!” The men of our age have to confront and solve terrible problems. These are pressing for solution; and if we cannot solve them, or in selfish apathy refuse to entertain them, like the fabled sphinx when her riddles were unread, they will devour us. Look, for example, at that awful feature of society, on which so many good men gaze sadly and thoughtfully, the state of so many millions of our labouring classes, deep sunk in ignorance, poverty, vice, and irreligion; and a lower stratum still, appalling in its extent, in the lowest depths of degradation

to which human beings can fall. Consider the position of woman among these sunken masses! With wealth accumulated in large hoards, and threatening to accumulate still more, we have hunger-bitten, bare-backed poverty all around—men broken in body and soul by heavy burdens, who by sorest toil can scarcely earn the daily bread. Looking at the toiling, struggling millions, whose lives are worn out in joyless wrestling with want, and whose whole existence is swallowed up in one terrible effort to drive back the wolf from the door, we might well cry out, “Is this your boasted civilisation of the nineteenth century—‘bread so dear, flesh and blood so cheap’—the bulk of our population scarce able to secure the first condition of existence?” After a thousand years of human effort, is this the result? To a thoughtful mind there is something very solemn, if not deeply saddening, in the aspect of one of our great cities of the present era, such as London, Paris, or New York. Walk through the main streets, and you see only splendour, luxury, overflowing abundance, magnificent buildings, shops where the richest products of human industry are displayed, and for the supply of which all creation has been ransacked. Every conceivable means of ministering to human comfort, taste, luxury, and pride, meet the eye in glittering heaps. And then the gay throngs that roll along these thoroughfares of commerce, how comfortable

apparently their existence!—glittering splendour around, industry, science, commerce, laying trophies at their feet! But step aside only a few paces from all this luxury and refinement, and you find yourself in poverty's squalid abode—in the midst of loathsome wretchedness, and moral degradation of the lowest type. Here the poor outcasts, "the wild Arabs of the streets," and multitudes, too, of the honest, toiling poor, are heaped and huddled together in the filthy lane, the pestiferous court, the dark, fetid alley, breathing a poisonous atmosphere, that reeks with contagion and death. The sweet air of heaven finds no entrance here; the sun's rays struggle faintly through the darkened air. Here disease, in its most hideous forms, is unceasingly at work—consumption, cholera, typhus, holding their endless revels. The outward darkness and degradation are only a type of the mental and moral darkness of thousands who find no other abode. Passing through these circles of prosperity, and all this magnificent girdle of refinement in the great thoroughfares, and these arteries filled with commerce, might we not enter this moral wilderness, these alleys of poverty, and sit down and weep over these victims of destitution and evil passions? Without hope or purpose—with little to gladden existence—and, alas! little thought of the dawning eternity, their life drags along. Here the fierce gnawings of hunger are felt

seizing the strong man by the throat, and killing the infant in its mother's arms. Here physical abominations pollute the breath of life, and sap away the strength; and all the sweet charities, the tender affections, the love that binds parent to child, sicken and die. Vice has no shame and no disguise here; and stalks about in her most hideous and revolting aspects. The bottle brings the stupor of beastly intoxication to ease the hearts of the sad, and drown the wretchedness of the present. The prosperous gin-palace and pawn-shop tell a wretched tale. What a training-ground for immortal souls! Only vice, brute-passion, and nameless abominations can thrive in this hot-bed of all that is vile. In these moral tombs there is no soil for the ideals that glorify our nature to take root. God is but a dark cloud of muttering thunder in the soul; womanhood is dis-crowned and dishevelled; and childhood trained in wickedness, and steeped in the evil passions that rages like a hell all around. How dark and inscrutable human destiny appears, as we look in on these terrible abodes, where immortal spirits are struggling amid such destructive surroundings! How poor seem all the victories of our gorgeous civilisation, when they leave untouched all this mass of men and women, formed in the image of God! Here is a sad and humbling off-set to the pomp and glitter of our world-embracing commerce—wealth accumulating,

men decaying, perishing ! Nay, many of these are the victims of our civilisation ; and the very circumstances in which they are placed, are the very results and conditions of our boasted progress in things material. Here is a picture of the toiling masses, drawn by Hood, the poet of the poor :—

“ Who does not see them sally
From mill and garret and room,
In lane and court and alley,
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,
Furnish'd with shuttle and loom,—
Poor slaves of civilisation's galley,—
And in the road and footways rally,
As if for the day of doom ?
Some of hardly human form,
Stunted, crook'd, and crippled by toil ;
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,
And smirch'd besides with vicious soil,
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm,
Father, mother, and careful child,
Looking as if it had never smiled—
The seamstress lean, and weary and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on—
The weaver, her sallow neighbour,
The grim and sooty artisan ;
Every soul—child, woman, and man—
Who lives, or dies, by labour.
Stirr'd by an overwhelming zeal,
And social impulse, a terrible throng !
Leaving shuttle, and needle and wheel,
Furnace and grindstone, spindle and reel,
Thread and yarn, and iron and steel—
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,
A very torrent of man !
Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,
Stop its course who can !

Stop who can its onward course !
And irresistible moral force—
Oh, vain and idle dream !
For surely as men are all akin,
Whether of fair or sable skin,
According to nature's scheme,
That human movement contains within
A blood-power stronger than steam."

Surrounded as we are, served and enriched by the splendid agents of modern civilisation, we are in danger of concluding that the material achievement is the highest achievement ; that the one thing needful is to accumulate capital and secure wealth ; that the problem of life is solved by the application of machinery, and thus of losing sight of the great firmament of immortality amid the flash and din of the flying wheels. We need something to remind us that the most genuine progress is not that which gives us a stronger grasp of the material world, but that which lifts us to higher moral levels, enriches the inner life, and enlarges our spiritual being. The lesson we need most of all to learn is, that the railway, the steam-driven ocean-ranger, and power-loom are real triumphs only when moral earnestness and Christian charity work through them all for ends that bring happiness to man and glory to God ; and that if they become merely ministers to human greed, or instruments of cruelty and injustice to our brothers, they will prove not blessings, but curses. We need to be constantly reminded that there is a power higher than that of

steam, nobler than mechanic force—the might of Christian love; and that man has that within him which is more precious than all the treasures of earth. Turning from these busy factories and roaring furnaces, we must fix our eyes more steadily on that humanity that is now suffering and toiling and sinning, and feel that here are higher interests than those of capital, and problems waiting for solution more important than any that science or commerce has yet presented. How to elevate, civilise, and save these sunken classes, these savages of civilisation—how to deal with our pauperism and crime, and with the multitudes who are now hovering on the verge of both, and painfully, but nobly, struggling to keep out of the devouring whirlpool,—that is the great problem for our age to solve, and one calling for all the intellect and virtue of the times. To reclaim these fallen brothers, to humanise these outcasts, to get them out of this living death, and to prevent the vast multitudes who are drifting towards this maelstrom from being drawn in,—this is a task for statesmen, philosophers, divines, and philanthropists. The problem, too, is pressing for a speedy solution, and cannot be ignored. These “dangerous classes” may precipitate themselves on the wealthy governing class, and, in the volcanic throes of a social revolution, modern society may speedily be reduced to chaos. These foul plague-spots must be healed, or death will be the

result. One cheering sign is that the disease is known, and the causes of it are getting investigated. It is now seen not to be confined to the great manufacturing cities, but that every town, every village, furnishes its cases in greater or less proportions. Even the colonies, as we know here by bitter experience, are getting more deeply tainted. Republican America, with all her unoccupied lands and immense prosperity, feels already pauperism and crime gnawing at her vitals :—

“ Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher.”

This is the danger that menaces our civilisation—this hungry, ignorant, hopeless people ; those helpless dumb millions weltering in a gulf that is daily widening, and if not filled up will one day swallow all.

I think most thoughtful men are getting to see that this terrible disease of modern society will by no means cure itself ; but that if let alone it must get worse and worse. The conviction, too, is making way that the modern poor-law, though a great improvement on the old arrangement, is no cure, but only a temporary expedient, necessary for the moment, to save human beings from death by hunger ; but calculated, in the end, to perpetuate or increase the evil. It is not a very cheering spectacle when, in the words of Carlyle, “ British liberty, shuddering to interfere with the rights of capital, takes six or eight millions of money annually to feed the idle labourer whom it

dare not employ." The great doctrine, too, that "to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," and, for the rest, to rely on "unlimited competition," is getting to be suspected as not embodying the gospel by which our era is to work out its deliverance. In fact, wise men see that there can be no one remedy—no panacea for expelling the complicated diseases of society. To reach the seat of the disease, it is now plain the remedy must be mainly moral in its nature ; though, hand in hand with this, physical improvement must be carried on. Ministration to the souls of men must be accompanied by ministration to their bodies. The gospel of pure air, personal cleanliness, and wholesome dwellings, must be preached and practised along with that higher gospel that brings healing and cleansing to the soul. Practical Christianity in the heart, flowing out into action, will proclaim and carry out both. This was the method adopted by the world's Redeemer—not teaching alone—not help for the sin-sick soul alone, but also for the weakness and wants of the body. The paralytic He healed—the leper He cleansed—the demoniac He delivered—the sick He restored. Thus, too, must we vanquish the world's evils, soothe humanity's sorrows, by removing the foul, unwholesome conditions in which our suffering brothers are plunged ; while at the same time we address ourselves to their immortal part. We shall err and fail, if we ignore the fact that man is an incar-

nate spirit, and that this spirit can often be approached only through outward and material conditions. The noblest and most hopeful charities now at work among the sunken masses, are those which follow out the Saviour's plan of comfort and relief for the body, and instruction for the soul ; which teaches the poor how to help themselves, to assert their own manhood, and support themselves by the labour of their own hands. This is what we want—Christianity, in its beauty and power, for the heart ; and education, in the spirit of the gospel, to give light and guidance to these dark bewildered millions. These must be the main appliances ; but with these other remedies will be combined. Labour, surely, might be better organised than at present ; the relation between employer and employed might be made more kindly wholesome and just—might have more confidence on both sides infused into it. Our horrible mammon-worship might be abated ; human energies might be directed to nobler ends by nobler methods. Emigration from old and over-crowded communities, where men are choking one another, as in the Black Hole of Calcutta, might be organised on a grand scale ; and instead of being left, as now, to blind chance, or the prompting of interested knaves and fools, and the feebleness of unguided individual effort, men might be led out, under wise and kind “captains of industry,” to cultivate the unoccupied plains and fertile savannas of

the West and East. The future will, doubtless, evolve projects of this nature, for the removal of existing evils. And when education is felt to be the birth-right of every human being; and when religion becomes the great working power of human society, animating to duty, and nerving to effort and self-denial, then may the poet's vision become a reality,—

“For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be :
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales,
Till the war drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle flags were furl'd,
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world—
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.”

I have only a word or two to say, in closing, on the literature of our age. That literature is becoming more and more a mighty power in society, is evident enough; and this is but the natural result of intellectual, social, and moral advance. In fact, the influence that one man of genuine power can now wield by his pen—the omnipotence of thought when directed by genius, are among the most cheering signs of the times, and give most glorious promise for the future. The vast increase in our current literature is proof of a vastly widened circle of readers; and shews how extensively mind has become awakened among the great masses of our population. Very cheering, too, is the growing tendency to cheapen wholesome literature, so as to bring it within the reach of all classes.

This will help to lift the working classes above animal indulgences and brutalising pleasures, elevating them in the scale of being, and helping to give the man a mastery over the animal. The quality of our literature, too, is another proof of progress. Take a periodical of the present day and compare it with a similar production of fifty years ago, and what an immense improvement is discernible—what freedom, depth, and power, in handling the subject—what enlarged and enlightened views compared with those that formerly prevailed. Morally, as well as intellectually, the productions of literature are of a higher type. Our reviews and magazines number among their contributors some of the ablest writers of the day; and, for the most part, fairly and honestly instruct the public taste. Our fictitious literature has assumed a high place, and, on the whole, is exerting a healthful influence, making us at once wiser and happier, more charitable, tolerant, and loving. Rarely, if ever, does impurity now sully its pages; for the most part, its influence is entirely on the side of virtue and good morals. And what an immense audience our writers of fiction have now obtained; what a congregation do these “week-day preachers” constantly address. With what fine creations they have peopled the fairy realms of fancy! Like friends and brothers, they come to us in our lonely hours, to cheer and brighten our daily life,—

“ That the night may be fill'd with music,
And the cares that infest the day,
May fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.”

Then consider our newspaper press—the greatest educator of the day. What a different thing it is from the days of old, and how mighty its influence! How brilliant the talent it exhibits! How fearlessly it aims its blows, even against the most exalted personages, when guilty of wrong-doing! What a wonderful world-history the daily paper presents, to be enjoyed with the morning meal. In fact, here are the materials out of which future Macaulays will construct history. On the whole, the great stream of newspaper literature is bearing blessings on its bosom: the immoral portion of it is getting weaker and disappearing; the healthful and elevating is commanding a wider influence. The weekly newspaper press has now representatives of the highest excellence, and the superior quality of the writing, in the thoughtful and often profound essays on current topics contained in their columns, indicates at once the genuine power and culture of the contributors, and the growing taste for literary excellence among those whom they address.

The conclusion of the whole matter, then, is—that human progress is a great reality, not a dream of enthusiasm; that nobler manners, purer laws, juster and truer thoughts, are making way; and that, how-

ever slowly, man is really rising to a loftier place in God's universe—to a nobler life and a higher blessedness. We are yet far enough from the best, but we can point to substantial, undeniable gains—to solid improvements. With Bacon, we hold that *these* are “the old times;” for earth and man are older now than they ever were; and as the vegetable soil is an accumulation from the riches of former creations, so the life of humanity now contains the best life and fruition of the past, along with a fresh vitality of its own. I have boundless faith in our modern progress, because it originated in our Divine Christianity, and is upheld by that faith in God and man, and that charity, kindled by the gospel of Christ, which seek to clasp the wide world in the arms of their mercy. The impulse to which we owe all real progress has been imparted by that religion which recognises the dignity, sanctity, and worth of the human soul, and beholds in every man, however depraved and fallen, a priceless jewel, for the recovery of which angels are solicitous, and for the redemption of which the Saviour died. This is the great truth that gives energy to the beautiful philanthropy that is the glory of our age, and sends it forth on its mission among the guilt and misery, the wrongs and injustice, the darkest depravities of our race, to search out the degraded outcast, the poor struggling victims of poverty and sin, to lift from the dust and restore the

children of our Father in heaven. And have we not reason to rejoice and look to the future with hope, when we see in our great cities the doleful regions of poverty, vice, and crime becoming girdled round by the loveliest Christian charities; the church, the ragged school, the district mission, the clothing club, the savings-bank, springing up in the very hot-beds of iniquity, that have hitherto been the shame of our civilisation? Gentle and loving hands are stretched out to help the fallen; and by wise guidance and attention to the body as well as the soul, to make them self-helpful and self-respecting. Let us hope that these noble efforts, prompted and sustained by Christian motives, will yet make these moral deserts "rejoice and blossom like the rose."

LECTURE THE TENTH.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

THE text of this discourse, I am bound to admit, is distressingly commonplace. For the last two hundred years or more, this phrase, "Knowledge is power," has been bandied about. Scholars of the highest rank have quoted the famous saying, and placed it as a motto on their title-page; and philosophers, as they ascended the steeps of science, have inscribed it on their banner. In our own day, however, this highly-respected aphorism has ceased to obtain currency in the higher circles of literature. It has, in fact, to some extent lost caste, and become vulgarised. From a great truth it has passed into a truism. The very schoolmaster has got it for a copy-line, and embodied it among the choice moral maxims that his penmanship sets before the eyes of the rising genera-

tion. People have become so bored with this stereotyped phrase, that they are inclined to vote it a nuisance that must be abolished. Even this is not the worst. Ever since the aphorism has got into circulation, it has passed current under the name of Bacon. All the world agreed in attributing the pithy saying to this great philosopher, and no doubt was suggested as to its authorship. Eminent scholars have quoted it with the venerable name of Bacon attached. Sir Archibald Alison, in the new series of his "History of Europe," does so ; and many a better read man has done the same thing before. In Sir E. B. Lytton's "My Novel," the world is amusingly proved to have been hoaxed in believing the saying to have come from the pen of Bacon. Bulwer makes the sage Ricabocca exclaim indignantly, "Bacon make such an aphorism ! The last man in the world to have said anything so pert and so shallow." Then he proceeds to assail it fiercely ; and having turned it inside out, he shakes it with contempt in the face of the community ; shewing that it must be understood with many limitations, if it has any truth at all ; and that, in its common acceptation, it is worthless. Ringing it hard, he finds it to be base coin, falsely bearing the superscription of Bacon, and he deliberately nails it to the counter. Thus, you see, the reputation of my text is not merely cracked, but absolutely rent asunder. It has been legally convicted of obtaining

respect under false pretences. The words are really not Bacon's. They occur, I believe, in the index to some early edition of his works ; but, in all probability, the author of them was some unknown editor, or nameless bookseller's hack, to whom the task of making an index had been consigned. Altogether, the case is a striking illustration how easy it is to impose on the world ; but it also reminds us that in the end the impostor is sure to be detected.

After all, I am inclined to think that there is some genuine worth, and a real body of truth, in a saying that has been current so long, and that has gained and kept the ear of the world for such a length of time. Though Bacon did not write it, still men conversant with his writings felt that it expressed, forcibly and clearly, the substance of much that he wrote, and, without examination, let it pass current under his name, as not unworthy the profoundest of modern thinkers. With all proper deference, then, to so great an authority as Bulwer, who has pointed out the mistake under which the world was labouring, we may venture to say that, though Bacon did not write it, yet he " might, could, would, or should " have written it. While we rectify the blunder as to its authorship, let us not rush to the extreme of discarding it as worthless. The words, I think, embody correctly a great and valuable truth ; and rightly understood, with proper reservations, and connected with

co-ordinate truths, are still worthy of respect and attention. Let us see in what sense it is everlastingly true that "knowledge is power."

It frequently saves a world of mistakes and misapprehension to define clearly the terms we use. I begin, therefore, by a definition of the word "knowledge." It is the peculiar distinction and glory of man that he is gifted with reason—that ray from the Divine Intelligence. In the exercise of this power, he can look abroad upon the universe and observe and classify what he perceives around him; he can mark individual objects and occurrences, and from these deduce general laws, and thus rise to first principles. He can treasure up his attainments, work them into new combinations, and record his observations. All this he does, in virtue of that intellectual power with which the Creator has gifted him. Just in the same way that the eye is fitted to receive the rays of light, and to transmit a picture of external objects to the seat of sensation, so is the mind of man fitted to observe and comprehend the outward universe. It is not more certain that the eye is adapted to light, than that the mind is adapted to the comprehension of God's creation. Here, on the one hand, is the glorious universe spread around us; here, on the other hand, is the intellect in which it is to be mirrored in its shadows and sunshine. The Creator has thus expressly formed the mind of man for the

comprehension of His wonderful works—for the acquisition of truth—that is, for the perception of facts as they are. The human intellect is the great truth-organ; realities, as they exist, are the objects of its study; and knowledge is the result of its acquaintance with the things to which it is related. You will at once see that knowledge, in this broad and philosophic sense, embraces the study of the two worlds of matter and mind. All possible subjects of human thought belong either to the material or spiritual department of existence. A knowledge of matter embraces an acquaintance with its laws, properties, and relations—with its modes of action and the results of its combinations. This is science in the widest sense of the term, and it has for its object the whole physical creation. The knowledge of mind, again, includes within its wide sweep God, the Supreme Intelligence, the mental and moral faculties of man, his position, destiny, and duties, and his doings during the past, as recorded in the pages of history. These, then, are the objects of knowledge in the most extended sense, and it is obvious that no created intelligence could become perfectly acquainted with the whole. Knowledge, perfect and unlimited, belongs only to the Infinite Mind, who created the whole, and therefore comprehends every part and every relation. The knowledge even of the highest created intelligence must be limited, and admit of continual advancement. The

most exalted of the angelic beings, to whose penetrating, far-glancing intellect many worlds—nay, perhaps, the whole of that strip of creation on which man gazes when he turns the telescope to the heavens—may be matter of intimate knowledge, could never exhaust the works of the Creator, but throughout eternity will find enough to employ all his soaring faculties. It is but the most insignificant fraction of creation that the mightiest mind on earth can know; and even that little is known but in part. The loftiest intellect therefore, well aware how small a proportion the known bears to the unknown, will ever be the humblest. At the close of a long life spent in the study of nature's profoundest mysteries, Newton said, "I feel that I am but like a child who has been amusing himself by collecting a few bright shells along the sea-shore—the great ocean of truth still lies undiscovered before me." A memorable utterance—worthy of the profound and reverential intellect that did so much to extend the boundaries of knowledge. But though our knowledge is necessarily limited, here is our encouragement—it is *progressive*. We cannot here know the whole, or even any portion, perfectly; but we can lay the foundation on which a lofty superstructure can be reared afterwards; we can become acquainted with some portion of the works of the Infinite Mind; we can enter on that glorious career of study for which the Creator designed all His intel-

ligent creatures—a study of that universe which is a realisation of His own thought. It is this that gives to the acquisition of knowledge all its dignity, grandeur, and importance ; that it is the employment God designed for man when He gifted him with reason, and “made him but a little lower than the angels ;” that in studying the universe, he is labouring to comprehend the thoughts and works of the Father of all, from whose creative hand all comes into existence ; and that thus he is fulfilling his destiny, perfecting his nature, and rising in the scale of being nearer and nearer to the soaring cherubim. It is this that throws a halo of glory around man’s path, and gives importance to his feeble and imperfect efforts in the acquisition of knowledge ; that every step is leading him onward and upward in the scale of being, and developing his powers ; and that when he here sits down to acquire the principles of any science, or to engage in any investigation, he is conquering a portion of the limitless kingdom that has been assigned him ; that he is coming nearer to the source of all knowledge, and entering on the employment of eternity. Viewed in this light, and pursued with such a purpose, knowledge is sacred, and the pursuit of it a solemn duty. In the highest and noblest sense, therefore, knowledge is power, as it raises man in the scale of being, and develops those exalted faculties with which his Creator has endowed him.

Let us advance to another view of the matter. If we consider the condition of man, as he has been placed on earth, we see at once that wanting knowledge, in the sense in which I have defined it, he is weak and helpless; with knowledge, he becomes powerful and victorious. He finds himself placed in the midst of a vast theatre, with the stupendous powers of nature at work around him. He gazes at first, in stupid astonishment, at the working of these forces, which he can neither arrest nor control. He seems a hapless stranger in a bleak unfriendly world. But that seemingly barren earth has wondrous capabilities. Within its bosom are the principles of fertility; and it needs but that man should acquire a knowledge of its capabilities, in order to render the soil productive by his labour, clothe the face of nature in beauty, "scatter plenty o'er a smiling land," and "make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." Thus it is that knowledge renders man lord of creation. Ignorant, he is a rude, helpless savage. He cannot, indeed, control the mighty agencies of nature. He cannot arrest the majestic river as it rolls its torrents to the ocean; but he can make it his servant, to water his fields, to drive his machinery, or float his merchandise. He cannot dry up the ocean, nor check its tides, nor chain its winds; but he can launch the strong-knit bark, and spread his canvas to the breeze; or calling to his aid the giant

power of steam, he can almost defy the force of wind and wave, in his stately ocean-ranger, that "walks the waters like a thing of life." He began by floating some little lake-canoe constructed of bark, or by scooping out a boat from a tree with his stone hatchet; and after many centuries of progress, he finds himself "lord of the mighty sea." And see how he has tamed the lower animals, and made them his servants! Mark how his tool-bearing hand has bridged the river, constructed the road, covered the earth with cities and palaces, and converted the tangled forest and the dismal swamp into the lovely landscape. Leaving earth, he has pierced the depths of the dark-blue heavens, numbered the stars, weighed the planets, tracked the comet's flaming course, gauged the depths of the milky way, resolved the mysterious nebulae,—the cloud-land of creation,—and read off nature's mighty laws in the "starry scriptures of the skies." All this, man—the intellectual monad—the only atom of organic life on earth that can grapple with the enigma of the universe—has done in virtue of that capability of acquiring knowledge with which his Creator has gifted him. When I look at man's achievements, I cannot but think with awe of the vast powers with which he has been intrusted—of the glorious nature he possesses. Is there not within him a spark of the Divinity? Though clay, he is not all clay; but a

wondrous union of the material and spiritual—of the mortal and immortal. It is such views of man as these that add force to the voice of that revelation which unveils his immortality. It is the suggestion of a deathless existence, to which this life is but the introduction, that lends solemnity to his studies, and anxiety to his pantings after that knowledge which has a bearing on the seen and the unseen.

Nothing gives us a more exalted idea of the triumphs over the material world which man has achieved by means of knowledge, than to contrast the present era with some of its predecessors. Let me present you with a single illustration. In the year 1754 the following advertisement appeared in the only newspaper Edinburgh could then boast of, the *Courant*:—

“The Edinburgh stage-coach, for the better accommodation of passengers, will be altered to a new, genteel, two-end glass coach-machine, hung on steel springs, exceeding light and easy, to go to London in *ten* days in summer and *twelve* in winter;—to set out the first Tuesday in March, and continue it from Hosea Eastgate’s, the Coach and Horses, in Dean Street, Soho, London, and from John Sommerville’s, in the Canongate, Edinburgh, every other Tuesday; and meet at Burrowbridge on Saturday night, and set out from thence on Monday morning, and get to London and Edinburgh on Friday. Passengers to

pay as usual. Performed, if God permits, by your dutiful servant,
HOSEA EASTGATE."

Thus you see, according to this announcement, honest Hosea, a century ago, started his "two-end glass coach-machine" on Tuesday morning from Edinburgh, and on the following Friday week, if no break-down took place, or no untoward mishap by highwaymen occurred on the way, his passengers were set down, with many an aching joint, I fear, in Dean Street, Soho, London. Travellers had ample time to look around them in those easy-going times, and enjoy the beauties of the landscape. The express train whirls passengers over the same distance now in ten hours, so that you may breakfast in Edinburgh and be in time for a late dinner in London; and, if so inclined, you may enjoy a comfortable nap by the way. No suffering from jolts now—no fear of being called upon by a highwayman to "stand and deliver." What makes the difference between 1754 and 1864? The expansion of that "knowledge which is power."

Let me bring before you another view of the subject. It is quite possible to prove that the greater the amount of human knowledge, the greater becomes man's power of lessening the evils that press upon him, and consequently of adding to his happiness. We have seen that knowledge means an acquaintance with some portions of the worlds of matter and mind.

Even a slender amount of knowledge shews us that we are placed under a great system of law—that both the material and moral worlds are regulated by an unvarying code of laws. By attaching a penalty, more or less severe, to the violation of these laws, the Creator has intimated that they are the expression of His will, and that He requires obedience to them on our part. If we transgress them, we are punished ; if we obey, we are rewarded. So that our happiness lies in obedience ; our misery is caused by disobedience to moral and material laws. We cannot, however, obey laws of which we are ignorant. Moreover, these laws are written, not in statute-books, but in the majestic volume of nature ; and must be studied, often painfully deciphered, and thoroughly understood, by the exercise of our rational powers. Hence, to place ourselves in harmony with the universe, and in intelligent obedience to the requirements of our Creator, we must first understand these laws ; and the more perfectly we comprehend them, the more power we shall possess to avoid misery and secure happiness. Knowledge, therefore, is directly conducive to our wellbeing ; ignorance will lead us to transgress in a thousand instances. Thus, for example, there are certain laws of our bodily constitution, on the observance of which health depends. If we breathe a polluted atmosphere, if we neglect cleanliness, or fail to secure a due amount of bodily

exercise, we sow the seeds of disease, and we must suffer. Gluttony and drunkenness are followed by their appointed penalties. If a nation permits a portion of its people to sink into a state of savage brutality, and to huddle together in dens of filth and wretchedness, in the courts and lanes of great cities, where the sun never shines, and the sweet breath of heaven never blows—where the dark, polluted dwelling is a type of the darkened, polluted soul,—inevitably the deadly typhus and cholera sweep down, vindicating Heaven's outraged laws, and forcibly reminding the rich and educated, by spreading these diseases among themselves, from the infected districts, that these savages of civilisation are their brothers, and that they have been criminally negligent of their duties towards them. Science steps in, and points to the physical law that has been violated, and demonstrates that the disease is no chance production—no mysterious visitation, and that the abomination must be removed before the punishment will cease. The root of the evil is thus laid bare; the connexion between the punishment and the transgression is made clear; and so far knowledge exerts a beneficent influence. Though it cannot root out human selfishness, yet it can forcibly appeal to self-interest; and by shewing the true remedy, it can indirectly arouse benevolent effort, and shame men out of their greed and hard-heartedness. Al-

ready many a disease that was once considered the mysterious judgment of an angry God, has been removed, when advancing knowledge discovered it to be the result of a flagrant transgression of some physical law. Ignorance of any law is never in the order of nature admitted as a plea or apology for transgression. Our ancestors were, from ignorance, sufferers from frightful diseases that are now entirely unknown. Small-pox was once the scourge of the race, carrying off many thousands of victims annually, and disfiguring for life where it did not kill. Vaccination has almost delivered us from the plague. Cleanliness and improved modes of life have freed us from many other awful diseases. Sanitary science has shewn what are the producing causes of fever, ague, consumption, cholera ; it has mapped the chosen homes of pestilence in our great cities ; and when the cause is known, benevolence and self-interest will rush to the rescue. Medical science, though it is far enough from perfection, has done much to mitigate human woe. The amputation of a limb was once a fearful operation, the effusion of blood being stopped by searing the raw surface with red-hot irons ; and with the shrieks of the unhappy sufferers, the hissing of human flesh, and the groans of the dying, an hospital was an awful place in the olden time. Now the patient is chloroformed, and after awaking from a gentle slumber, he finds the diseased member gone.

And, then, what alleviations of suffering does medicine afford—what gentle anodynes of pain and restorers of the exhausted springs of life! Suppose as great an advance to be made during the next fifty years as during the past half-century in such discoveries, and how many of “the ills that flesh is still heir to” may be swept away! Consumption may be almost unknown, or as rare as small-pox is now; typhus annihilated; cholera banished to its native jungle; and man, living more in accordance with the laws of his physical nature, will rise in the scale of being, as he becomes free from the distressing evils that now press upon him. To understand and obey the material laws, will be an important step towards a recognition of the great moral laws, which are no less real and certain in their operation.

“ So man, by painful ages taught,
Will build at last on truthful thought,
And wisdom won from sorrow.”

The value of knowledge, in adding to human happiness and removing human woes, thus becomes more and more evident. No truth can long remain barren or useless; in some shape it will be found conducive to man's wellbeing. The results of a new discovery we can never foresee; they may prove to be world-wide, and lasting as time. The foolish old alchemists spent many a long year searching for the philosopher's stone, that was to transmute all metals

into gold. In their visionary search, however, they stumbled on certain great facts that laid the foundation of our modern chemistry, from which we are reaping rich fruits to-day. What a revolution for the better, in our arts and manufactures, it has brought about! What a reduction in the expense of production, thus bringing comforts and enjoyments within the reach of the million! Chemistry has turned her keen gaze on the process of vegetation, analysed the composition of soils, and shewn that, by the application of science to agriculture, the productions of the earth may be increased manifold, and food provided for the multiplying populations of the world. She gathers up the sweepings of flax and cotton mills, and other vile, worthless rags, and surpasses the dreams of the alchemist, by transmuting them into paper, on which men's thoughts are stamped, and fluttered over the world. More wonderful still—she sets to work on an Irish bog, and applying her magic retort, she extracts from it an inflammable substance known as *paraffine*; and from the unsightly black bog produces snow-white candles, fit for the halls of nobles. Some centuries ago, a thoughtful Italian philosopher discovered that a certain piece of ore, dug out of the bowels of the earth, had the property of pointing out the unseen north, and ever trembled faithful to the Pole. That little piece of seemingly worthless ore has made the pathless deep a highway for the nations of

the earth ; in the darkest night it guides the mariner out on ocean's heaving breast. By its aid the Cape of Storms was doubled, America and Australia discovered, the produce of the glowing East and the riches of the West brought to our doors ; and mankind linked in a great brotherhood of interests. The whole creation is laid under contribution for the supply of our wants. The poorest have now luxuries that once monarchs could not command. On our breakfast-tables we have the tea of China, the coffee of Turkey, the sugar of the East or West Indies. The cotton that clothes us was grown in America or Egypt—the wool perhaps in Australia—the furs that exclude the winter's cold came from the icy north. The wood of which our household furniture is made, grew where “the feathery palm-trees rise.” All these advantages and comforts we can trace to the man who first poised the trembling needle on its pivot. Then think of the results that are flowing from the application of steam-power to machinery. We can now traverse the land with eagle swiftness ; we can ride the ocean in the teeth of the storm ; we can cross the mighty Atlantic in eight or ten days. India is every year coming nearer to England ; the isthmus of the Americas is pierced by a railroad, and will speedily be the great highway to Australia, California, and the Isles of the Pacific. Our untiring servant, steam, is gradually taking all the heavy toil off

our shoulders—carding, spinning, weaving for us—forming our tools and working our mines. So true is it, to whatever department of nature we turn, that knowledge is power.

But there is a higher inquiry. What are likely to be the moral results of all these physical improvements? Is the tendency of increasing knowledge favourable to the development of man's moral and religious nature? I think it is impossible to doubt that in arranging external nature, so that man's genius can strike out these great discoveries, the Creator designed to free man from grinding toil—to save him from being degraded and crushed by heavy labour; and thus to secure for him leisure to cultivate his intellectual nature in the pursuit of knowledge, and his moral nature in the practice of virtue. We infer, therefore, that the great discoveries of our nineteenth century have a moral purpose. Their ultimate result will be to raise man above the condition of a mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water;" and to secure a clear stage for the development of his higher nature, under the teachings of science and the benign influence of Christianity. I am quite aware that such results are far enough from being yet attained. Among a limited class, no doubt, there has been some abridgment of the hours of labour, and there is a prospect of still farther improvement in this direction. But with the masses, in the over-crowded countries of

Europe, "bread is" still "dear," and "flesh and blood very cheap;" the struggle for life is still sore, and for thought and culture the moments are brief and far between. Hitherto, our great material improvements tend to collect capital in the hands of a few,—to create a plutocracy and millocracy,—and, as a consequence, to spread the worship of the golden calf, and to make gold, not intellectual or moral worth, the standard of the man. But are we to believe that the present state of things is final? Is it not more probable that we are in a transition state, and that our present industrious, property-gathering era, which, after all, is better than its predecessors, is but a stepping-stone to something nobler and better? The Great Father, who loves all His children, will not permit millions of them to remain ever in darkness and degradation, toiling merely to live, and living only to toil; and in the wondrous changes we see going on around us, His benign purposes are working out their deliverance. Labour will yet obtain its rights; the light of knowledge will penetrate; education will be claimed and allowed as the birthright of all; true progress will then become possible. Did not these triumphs of mind over matter, and the ten thousand discoveries of science in our nineteenth century, conduce to this result, what would they be worth after all? They give us, let us suppose, more to eat and drink, gayer clothing and more luxurious accommodation. But suppose they

do—what then? Is man, that wondrous piece of workmanship, a mere “patent digester,” sent into the world for no higher purpose than to transmute animal and vegetable substances into human nature; and is it enough for him that his stall be well supplied? Or is he a mere clothes-horse, and the purpose of existence to deck his little person, and strut admiringly before the looking-glass? If steam and the electric telegraph did nothing more than enable Dives to increase his roll of bank-notes, and add house to house and acre to acre, their results would be poor indeed. Or if they only furnished more amusement, or enlarged the range of our material enjoyments, we need not boast very highly of our attainments. But just because we believe that the spread of knowledge makes men better as well as wiser—because we hold that the intellect is so closely connected with the moral nature, that as you cultivate the one you favourably influence the other—because we see that the reception of knowledge into the mind has a purifying and elevating tendency,—we regard knowledge as a moral power. We see that it raises man above the condition of the animal; gives him tastes for something better than sensual indulgence, and saves him from sinking into the condition of the brute. To impart to a man the mere power of reading, is to give him a source of enjoyment that he had not before; it is to introduce

him to the pleasures of the mind ; to awaken and stir the intellectual fire of his nature ; so that, at least, he is far less likely to become the slave of appetite and passion, or the victim of depraved and vicious habits. We know, too, that conscience itself requires the aid of an enlightened intellect to preserve it from error. What but the want of knowledge gave rise to that superstition which maintained such a long and dreary reign over the world, and which is yet banished from but a small portion of the earth ? To banish superstition there is but one way—to let in light, and the darkness will disappear. Ignorance is neither the mother of true devotion, nor yet its friend or helper. The religion that shrinks from the light and dreads investigation, and would keep its votaries in ignorance, is unworthy of the name, and must perish as the inevitable tide of knowledge rolls in. Looking at all these considerations, it seems to me little less than a libel on Him from whom all knowledge comes, to deny the moral tendency of knowledge. It is to impeach His infinitely wise arrangements, and to assert that the end for which He has placed man on earth is not conducive to his highest and best interests. Let no man, then, dread the spread of knowledge. Let not the Christian suppose that it can shake the foundations of his faith, or lessen his reverence for religion. Let not the statesman suppose that it can en-

danger the stability of government to enlighten the people. In their ignorance alone is real danger to be apprehended. Let not the man of rank suppose that the spread of knowledge among the lower orders would unfit them for their station in life or render them less industrious. Let us ever cherish it, as one of our dearest beliefs, that the direct tendency of all true knowledge is to remove the evils that are oppressing man, and to increase and multiply the good that is in the world. And bearing in mind that all these discoveries on which we have been dwelling have a bearing directly or indirectly on man's intellectual and moral nature, as well as his religious interests, we may welcome them as Heaven-sent gifts—as portions of a Divine plan that is ever unfolding.

Let me refer you to one other benefit flowing from knowledge—one that is less palpable, and attracts less attention, but is no less real than those I have named. I mean the mental pleasure which it brings. Suppose no material benefits reached us by knowledge, such is the pure, elevating mental enjoyment which ever accompanies the discovery of truth, that this alone would be a sufficient inducement, and an ample reward for the study of nature. Man's mind is so constituted, that knowledge is its natural and necessary food, which it receives with a keen relish and enjoyment. Every new fact, every fresh dis-

covery, is thus welcomed for its own sake, independent altogether of its consequences. The solitary mathematician, in his dreamy abstractions, pursuing, in devious and winding calculations, some great problem, tastes a joy that is almost inexpressible when the long-sought truth brightens on his eager gaze, and he exclaims in rapture, with Archimedes of old, "Eureka! eureka!"—I have found it! I have found it!

" All the soul in rapt suspension,
All the quivering, palpitating'
Chords of life in utmost tension,
With the fervour of invention,
With the rapture of creating."

It is said that when Sir Isaac Newton approached the grand discovery for which his name is world-renowned,—the great secret of the universe, the law of gravitation,—so overpowered was he by his emotions, as he found the proofs becoming clearer, that he was unable to proceed with his calculations, and had to obtain the assistance of a friend to complete them. And just fancy how the eyes of glorious old Galileo must have glistened, how tumultuously his heart must have throbbed with delight, when he first turned his telescope to the heavens, and obtained a glimpse of the mazy dances of the sky, and got the first decisive intimation that the planets are whirling round the central luminary! And when, in our own day, Galileo's little tube expanded into Rosse's gigantic telescope, enlarging the material universe visible to

man 125,000,000 times beyond what Herschel's instruments had made known, and bringing into view suns and systems whose existence had been unsuspected before, could we conceive of the glow of ecstasy with which its constructor first gazed upon the new fields of creation? When, on pointing it to the dim patch of cloud, called the nebula of the great constellation Orion, on which Herschel and La Place had built in a great measure their nebular theory, he found the filmy masses of light resolved into clusters of stars, shining and rolling orbs, suns and centres of systems, thousands in number, evolved, as it were, from small dusky spots. What a rapturous sight was that! What an enlargement of our conceptions regarding the grandeur of God's creation! What former astronomers, owing to the weakness of their telescopic powers, concluded to be chaotic matter in the process of being condensed into systems of worlds, undergoing a gradual creative formation, Lord Rosse's telescope has shewn to be blazing luminaries, whose immense distance in the depths of space caused them to appear as hazy films of light until this powerful instrument was brought to bear upon them. Thus a loftier anthem has been added to the swelling music of the spheres. These hazes floating through space are now significant. Each speck becomes a galaxy—a throng of rolling activities. Is there not something elevating, enrapturing in such discoveries? And do

we not all sympathise with the feelings of the astronomer who a few years ago achieved one of the noblest triumphs of modern science, in pointing out the quarter of the heavens where a new planet would be found—beyond Uranus ; and not only so, but actually weighing its mass and describing the dimensions of its orbit correctly, before the searching eye of the astronomer had singled it out. His feelings must have been akin to those of Newton on unfolding the law of gravitation, when his calculations were verified by the discovery of the planet Neptune in the exact quarter indicated. Nor is it only the original discoverers of great truths who experience such delight, though they must feel it most intently, but all pure minds to which they obtain admittance will experience some degree of the same pleasure. Let any one sit down and master the principles of modern astronomy, and its sublime revelations will bring him a delight undreamt of before ; and as he comprehends something of the great system of the universe, and learns that those twinkling stars are suns, with planets rushing round them—that there is no limit to creation, but the more the telescope's power is increased, the mightier are its revelations—and that our solar system is but a mere atom of creation,—how such discoveries will enlarge his views and elevate his conceptions of the omnipotent Creator ! Or let him turn his gaze upon the earth, and dive into the

wonders of geology, and read the history of our globe as written in the stony tablets underneath our feet ; let him study the remains of those gigantic, uncouth forms that once trod its surface, before man's day, and try to imagine the enormous periods of time occupied in the formation of its strata, and how startling, as well as enrapturing, will he find such disclosures. Talk of the pleasures of imagination ! Did this faculty ever tell us anything half so wonderful as the revelations of science ? Who could surmise beforehand that the light which is seen on the back of a cat, when gently rubbed in a frosty evening, is the same substance as darts from the thunder-cloud, in the lightning's lurid glare, irresistible in its might—that it is identical with light, heat, and magnetism—nay, that in all probability it produces the phenomena of life, circulates the blood, digests the food, and conveys the commands of the will to the muscles ? All this, science shews that electricity accomplishes, besides carrying on colossal changes in our globe. Or, to take another example, did ever Eastern story tell us such a wondrous tale as that we find in the pages of science, regarding the circulation of matter ? Not a particle of matter can ever be lost or destroyed ; it is continually passing into new combinations, but is indestructible. The atom that this moment is glittering in the rainbow, will the next feed the fainting rose, and form part of its substance ;

and the rose will die, that its particles may live in another form. Nor less fitted to arrest the attention, and gratify curiosity, is the recent discovery of the dynamical theory of heat, which shews that the creation or destruction of energy is just as impossible as the creation or destruction of matter itself.

Permit me now to draw this address to a close, by mentioning one or two limitations with which you should receive these statements in reference to knowledge. The attainment of knowledge is not the highest purpose of existence. It is but a means, after all, to enable us to reach a higher and nobler end. We are not sent into the world merely to become students or scholars, but to be and to act—to do the work appointed us manfully and well. We are to know, in order to be able to act rightly. While ignorant, we neither understand our work, nor how to set about it; we are but blind Cyclops groping round our cave, with huge strength, but no light to guide us. Knowledge is just like the sun in the heavens, inviting us to noble deeds, and lighting our path. Hence knowledge should ever be pursued under a deep religious purpose, and should be regarded as a sacred trust—a handmaid to religion, which is man's highest attainment and end. The intellect is but a part of man's nature. He has, besides, a conscience, affections, and a capacity for religion; and intellectual culture alone would leave

these higher departments of his being uncared for. To intellectual we must add, therefore, moral and religious training, if we would educate the whole man. I believe Christianity to be the divinely-appointed instrument for the latter purpose. Still religion, if it be not founded on knowledge, and guided by an instructed intellect, will become superstition, as all history tells us. Many a dark dream of superstition has been swept away by knowledge; and many more will share the same doom. A clearer and healthier day will beam on man, when these fogs from the swamps of superstition are all dispersed. Let science and religion go hand in hand—the one the instrument, the other the guiding soul; and then knowledge will indeed become a power, not sought after for low, selfish, or evil ends, but guided by the inspiration of religion, to work out the highest interests of humanity.

LECTURE THE ELEVENTH.

THOMAS HOOD—HIS LIFE AND POETRY.

IN this working world, where the ordinance of labour is so stern and imperative, there always have been, and always will be, two orders of workers—those who labour with the hand, and those who labour with the head. Both are needed, and both are to be venerated. Great have been the achievements of that wondrous instrument, the human hand. All civilisation and progress are but a testimony to its mighty powers. We may truly regard it as God's delegated missionary on earth, for without it the world would never have been conquered. Those cunning fingers, which first constructed the rude hut of the savage, in due time built up the Pyramids, the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the Gothic cathedral; wove an iron pathway over broad rivers; laid down the railway, along which thunders the modern Titan—the hissing loco-

motive. The same instrument struck from the harp its hidden strains of harmony; poised the mariner's trembling needle upon its axis; pointed the tubes of Galileo to search the depths of space; spread the sails of Columbus; wielded the sword with which freedom won her battles; spread out the page on which poet and sage were to inscribe their burning thoughts. Honour to the hand-workers—the men of the hammer, axe, and plough—who have smoothed and fertilised the rude earth! Who shall dare to despise the men of the hard hand and iron sinew?

Not less deserving of honour are the brain-workers—the men of the book and pen—who do the world's thinkings—who beat out, on the mental anvil, the ideas which move and rule mankind—the inventors, discoverers, lawgivers, philosophers, writers, poets of our race. Without the thinking brain to guide it, what could the hand accomplish? Wanting intellectual light to direct them, what useful end could the strokes of labour accomplish? The hand can only achieve anything great by crystallising ideas, by making the speculations of the mind material. This great universe itself, with its worlds and seas and stars, its pomp and retinue of splendour, its heavens “fretted with golden fires,”—all was at first a thought in the Divine Mind, and before it took material shape was fashioned in the shrines of Infinite Wisdom. And so of all human workmanship; time was when each

part was shaped in the brain of some shrewd thinker; then it took form in iron, wood, or stone. Hand and brain are thus fellow-workers. The one cannot say to the other, "I have no need of you." The priesthood of labour is in alliance with the priesthood of letters. The poet, who weaves our ballads, songs, and poems; the novelist, who gladdens us with the overflowings of his fancy or humour; the preacher, the moralist, the editor—nay, the lecturer, who talks away his little hour, are no less needed than he who smites upon the anvil or wields the axe and spade. Let us honour, then, our workers in the world of mind, who give light and guidance to the toiler for the daily bread, who hold up before us those great ideals of beauty and excellence, without which we must sink into mere mechanical drudges; who keep us in contact with the spiritual realms of thought and imagination, and sweeten the springs of action and emotion; who come to us, in our lonely hours, when the toils and cares of life are heavy on the heart, and charm us out of our sadness. Above all, let us love our gentle poets, who are like angels on the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven, bringing us messages from the skies, gladdening and brightening and beautifying our poor earthly life, and lifting us to nobler heights, and conveying to us some whisperings from the unseen. It is one of this class that I have undertaken to bring before you—one of our

poetic benefactors, who has left us, in his works, a legacy which the world is now beginning more fully to appreciate.

Hardly any of you can be quite strangers to the name of Thomas Hood. That man must be living apart from the world of modern literature whose eyes have never lighted on one of Hood's tenderly sweet creations, or who has never smoothed the wrinkles from his brow over some of those humorous fancies, those grotesque effusions of his comic genious, or those wonderful word-twistings, which made punning itself respectable and provocative of smiles. He is now some eighteen years in his grave ; but every day his fame is extending. The genuine worth that was in him, as writer and poet, is now better understood. The world is discovering that beneath that thin disguise of mockery and laughter, there was a heart alive to all that was tender and good—a genuine human, loving heart, that throbbed responsive to every woe of humanity, and was keenly alive to the sorrow and mystery of this strange existence. It is now generally admitted that in Hood there was not only the sparkle of wit, but the gold of genius ; and that by the clear glittering stream of his wonderful, inexhaustible humour, there lay a fountain of tears that overflowed at the sight of human wretchedness. He heard not only the gladdening ringing laughter, but also "the still sad music of humanity."

In him was that spirit of love and sympathy which evinces the kindred that all men recognise, and recognises the truth of nature beneath all changes, customs, and conventionalities. The poetry of Hood must live and continue to charm, just because it is human-universal in its sweep and melody—because it reproduces all the feelings of our wayward nature—shewing how man was made to be merry, and how he was made to mourn—entering the soul both on its sunny and gloomy side, and at times expanding the heart with laughter, or chastening it with melancholy. Two of Hood's children have given to the world Memorials of their father; and these volumes supply materials from which, it is to be hoped, some duly-qualified writer will construct a life of our poet. It is true no life could be more devoid of stirring incidents. In him there were none of those wild outbursts of passion that lend such an interest to the careers of Byron or Burns. His was a quiet, domestic life, so broken by sickness, that it might be called a long disease. Still, though there is nothing glittering or startling in the life of Hood, there is a deep and touching lesson conveyed to us in the heroic struggle he maintained with weakness, poverty, illness, and the rude buffetings of the world. Beneath the quiet exterior, we see a real tragedy enacted; and in the noble resolution, the cheerful endurance, the gentle acquiescence, we re-

cognise the spirit of the hero, true and brave to the close. All his bodily sufferings, all he endured in the weary years when, with shattered health and death constantly looking him in the face, he had to toil like a galley-slave in his profession,—all the rude buffetings of fortune failed to sour his heart, or infuse one drop of gall into the effusions of his pen.

It was in London, and in the month of May 1799, that Thomas Hood drew his first breath. His father was a bookseller and publisher, a man of some culture and literary tastes, who was the author of two novels, once rather popular, but now so entirely buried in the literary dust-heap of the past, that their very names are forgotten. His father was a Scotchman; his mother English. When Thomas was quite young, the father died, leaving a widow and four children but very slenderly provided for. His only brother perished early by consumption, a disease which afterwards carried off his mother and another sister; so that this deadly malady was an heirloom in the family. It was on the death of this sister that he wrote afterwards the pathetic lines entitled—

THE DEATHBED.

“ We watch’d her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

“ So silently we seem’d to speak,
So slowly moved about,

As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

“ Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied—
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

“ For when the morn came, dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours.”

Not wishing to encroach on the family store, our future poet, at the age of fifteen, was apprenticed to an engraver; and so commenced “life in earnest” with the drudgery of this sedentary occupation. At this time he is described by one who knew him as “a singular boy, silent and retired, with much quiet humour, and apparently delicate health.” Owing to the state of his health, he was speedily compelled to give up engraving, and was sent on a visit to some of his relatives in Dundee, where he made his first appearance in print in one of the local newspapers, and also in the pages of a magazine. What led to this, unless, as he said himself, he “had a dash of ink in his blood,” which broke out in a tendency to authorship, is not stated in the Memorials. He afterwards described his first literary triumph in the *Dundee Advertiser* and the *Dundee Magazine*, by saying that the respective editors “published his writings *without charging anything for insertion.*” In Dundee

he remained two years, and returned to London, much improved in health, in 1821. An old friend of his father's was at this time proprietor of a periodical called the *London Magazine*, and made Hood an offer of the situation of sub-editor, whose main duties were to correct the press and examine papers sent for insertion. Thus was he fairly launched into the world of literature, and took kindly to the vocation nature had marked out for him. Speedily he became a contributor of original papers to the *London Magazine*—his first attempt being some verses on "Hope," the kind genius that was now cheering his solitude and waving him up the steeps of literature. Soon other papers, chiefly in the humorous vein, followed; and our young hero adopted fairly a laborious and uncertain profession, in which he must earn his bread by sweat and toil of brain. He was now one of the guild of letters,—a brotherhood which he afterwards described as "master-minds at journey-work; moral magistrates, greatly under-paid; immortals, without a living; menders of the human heart, breaking their own; mighty intellects, without their mite."

We naturally ask how it was that Hood, at the age of twenty-one, found himself qualified to write articles for a magazine that numbered among its contributors such able writers as Charles Lamb, De Quincey, Allan Cunningham, Talfourd, and Hartley Coleridge? By what training was he fitted, at such an early age, to

take his place among these eminent authors—to produce a poem such as “*Lycus the Centaur*,” or the humorous “*Ode to Dr Kitchener?*” To a great extent Hood was self-taught. He received a fair elementary education, and was a tolerable classical scholar. But, as a literary man, he was self-equipped. In his case, it was fortunate that his training-school was London. Here, “in among the throngs of men,” he was thoroughly at home; and with the multitudinous billows of life heaving around him, and rushing and roaring along the stony arteries, he took his first life-lessons. We naturally fancy that the quiet country, with its green fields and bright skies, must be the “meetest nurse for a poetic child;” but some of our greatest poets have been brought up, and have written amid the din and smoke of the great city. Only suppose the poetic faculty to exist, and we can readily see how the sights and sounds of the city should develop it. Here life appears in its intensest forms; thought is most active; intelligence most rapid; the best equipped intellectual workmen are gathered; mental food, in books and conversation, most abundant. It is in the city that life presents its most animating and its most death-like pictures. Every variety of existence is crowded here; horror and beauty sit side by side; the devout song and the submissive prayer mingle with the shouts of revelry or the curses of profanity. Here benevolence drops

her tears; and here, too, man preys upon his brother; and helpless, hopeless poverty creeps into its gloomy cell to pine and die. These crowds hurrying ceaselessly along the streets,—each unit a distinct individual, carrying with him a world of his own, apart from all the others,—what a study they are,—

“The mild, the fierce, the stony face.”

Think of Hood as a delicate, pale-faced boy, roaming through the streets of mighty London, looking with his eager, poetic eyes on its magnificence and misery, its ghastliness and its glory, its wealth and its poverty, its bright Regent Street and its black Newgate, its silks and its jewels jostled by

“Poverty, hunger, and dirt.”

Was it not here, in the London streets, reading the epic and tragedy of life in all their grand or gloomy aspects, that he acquired that deep and sympathetic understanding of the life of the poor who are hopelessly imprisoned in these lanes and alleys, which at length found voice in the immortal “Song of the Shirt,” and “The Bridge of Sighs?” But in books he had another great teacher. The profession of his father brought him early into contact with these greatest of human instructors, and from his boyhood he had a passionate love for books. In one of his latest productions he thus gratefully recorded his obligations to these early companions:—“To litera-

ture I owe something more than earthly welfare. Adrift early in life upon the great waters, if I did not come to shipwreck, it was that, in default of paternal or fraternal guidance, I was rescued, like the Ancient Mariner, by guardian spirits, 'each one a lovely light,' who stood as beacons to my course. Infirm health and a natural love of reading happily threw me, instead of worse society, into the company of poets, philosophers, and sages—to me good angels and ministers of grace. From these delightful associates I learned something of the Divine and more of the human religion. They were my interpreters in the House Beautiful of God, and my guides among the Delectable Mountains of Nature. They reformed my prejudices, chastened my passions, tempered my heart, purified my tastes, elevated my mind, and directed my aspirations. These bright intelligences called my mental world out of darkness like a new creation, and gave it 'two great lights,' hope and memory—the past for a moon, and the future for a sun."

During Hood's engagement as sub-editor of the *London Magazine*, he enjoyed occasional intercourse with the leading contributors—Hazlitt, Allan Cunningham, and Charles Lamb. Of Lamb he has given us a pleasant sketch:—"With his fine head on a small spare body; his intellectual face full of wiry lines, and lurking quips and cranks of physiognomy; brown,

bright eyes, quick in turning as those of birds—looking sharp enough to pick up pins and needles; shy with strangers, but instantly alight with a welcome smile of womanly sweetness for his friends.” At times, too, he listened to the glorious talk of Coleridge, and the flowing, sparkling effusions of De Quincey. Hood speedily discovered that the public are much more willing to pay for being amused than for being instructed, and that his poetry was far from being as profitable as his puns. He was thus led to work two veins—the comic, which produced those laughter-moving “whims and oddities,” droll fancies and surprising incongruities, that for years kept thousands in food for mirth; and the poetic, which brought him no pecuniary returns, but in its riches constituted his higher life. The former yielded him bread, the latter ultimately poetic fame.

It was at this time, when Hood was in his twenty-fourth year, that he was rash enough to fall in love—a most unjustifiable proceeding, as some would think, on the part of a young man whose purse was in a state of collapse, and whose prospects were the reverse of cheering. I presume “the necessity of loving” must have been strong within him; and, after all, perhaps Douglas Jerrold is right when he exclaims, “What! live in a palace without a petticoat?—’tis but a place to shiver in. Whereas, take off the house-top, break every window, make the doors creak,

the chimneys smoke, give free entry to the sun, wind, and rain—still will a petticoat make the hovel habitable—nay, bring the little household gods crowding about the fireplace.” The family of Miss Reynolds, the young lady to whom Hood had formed an attachment, were opposed to the union, considering a young man who had only a bottle of ink out of which to supply the wants of a wife and family as anything but an eligible offer. The young lady, however, thought otherwise, and, as usual, opposition made her more determined. “Strange,” says Jerrold, “is the love of woman—it’s like one’s beard, the closer one cuts it the stronger it grows.” I suppose those fine lines in his poem of “Miss Kilmansegg” must have been suggested by Hood’s experience in love-making:—

“ And still when a pair of lovers meet,
There’s a sweetness in air, unearthly sweet,
That savours still of that happy retreat
Where Eve by Adam was courted ;
Whilst the joyous thrush and the gentle dove
Woo’d their mates in the boughs above,
And the serpent as yet only sported.

“ Who has not felt that breath in the air,
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,
When young hearts yearn together ?—
All sweets below and all sunny above,
Oh ! there’s nothing in life like making love,
Save making hay in fine weather.”

Matters speedily came to a crisis ; courtship ended in marriage. Hood and his young wife set up house-

keeping in a quiet, modest way, in London ; and the first years of his married life were undoubtedly the happiest and most unclouded he ever knew. Though not rich in this world's goods, they had the wealth of affection, and realised his own felicitous description of a happy, though humble home :—

“ For all is bright and beauteous and clear,
And the meanest thing most precious and dear,
When the magic of love is present ;
Love that lends its sweetness and grace
To the humblest spot and the plainest face,
That turns Wilderness Row to Paradise Place,
And Garlic Hill to Mount Pleasant.

“ Love that sweetens sugarless tea,
And makes contentment and joy agree
With the coarsest boarding and bedding ;
Love that no golden ties can attach,
But nestles under the humblest thatch,
And will fly away from an emperor's match
To dance at a penny wedding.”

Few men have been more fortunate than Hood in the choice of a wife. Seldom, if ever, has there been a truer, gentler, more devoted wife than Mrs Hood. In his long years of sickness and sorrow and toil that lay before him, she was truly his “ministering angel,” cheering, soothing, comforting in trial, and brightening his happy hours with the sunshine of her smiles. Some one has said that it is owing to the fact that woman lost us the original Paradise that she often strives so hard to transform earth into Eden, and feels bound to wait on the

pleasure of man, her serene lord and master, and try to make amends for the original injury. If so, it must be confessed that little account against her is long in getting settled, and that she has sore tugging in making up the amount. Hood's wife was a woman of cultivated mind, literary tastes, and no small share of humour. He had such confidence in her judgment, that he read and re-read with her all he wrote ; and in his references and quotations she was his authority. Hood repaid her affection with the warmest attachment through life ; and towards the close he could hardly bear her out of his sight, or write unless she were with him. A good husband has been defined as "one who is as regular at his fire-side as the tea-kettle." From all that appears, Hood was a model husband in this as well as in other respects. After years of wedded life, his letters to her during some brief absences breathe all the affectionate ardour of love-letters. In one of them he said, "I never was anything, dearest, till I knew you ; and I have been a better, happier, and more prosperous man ever since. Lay by that truth in lavender, sweetest, and remind me of it when I fail." It was of themselves he wrote these lines :—

“ There is care that will not leave us,
And pain that will not flee ;
But on our hearth, unalter'd,
Sits love 'tween you and me.

“ Our love it ne’er was reckon’d,
Yet good it is and true—
It’s *half* the world to me, dear ;
It’s *all* the world to you.”

Dante has immortalised his Beatrice, Petrarch his Laura, and Burns his “bonnie Jean;” and when the lives of those women who have ministered to men of genius in their sore life-struggles shall be written, one of the noblest chapters will be devoted to the wife of Thomas Hood. To her unwearied care and watchful tenderness we are largely indebted for those productions of her husband’s pen which have touched the fountains of our tears and smiles. Not only did she nerve him to fresh efforts, by diffusing sunshine within, and inspiring him to face the troubles of the world bravely, but it might be truly said that her devotedness transfused a part of her life into his. How touchingly her husband acknowledged this in the following beautiful lines :—

“ Those locks are brown to see, love,
That now are turn’d to gray ;
But the years were spent with me, love,
That stole their hue away.
Thy locks no longer share, love,
The golden glow of noon ;
But I’ve seen the world look fair, my love,
When silver’d by the moon !

“ That brow was smooth and fair, love,
That looks so shaded now ;
But for me it bore the care, love,
That spoil’d a bonny brow ;

And though no longer there, love,
The gloss it had of yore,
Still memory looks and dotes, my love,
Where hope admired before."

Thus it is ever—man toils and conquers; woman trains and inspires him. "Columbus discovers a new world; but it is an Isabella who pawns her jewels to equip the hero."

During the first ten years of his married life, Hood lived in London or its neighbourhood, supporting himself by literature, his reputation as a writer rising every year, and his circumstances being easy. It was during this period that he produced "Odes and Addresses;" "Whims and Oddities;" "National Tales;" "Tylney Hall," a novel; "The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies," a poem that was his own favourite, but did not take with the public; and "The Dream of Eugene Aram," which discovered high poetic power, and is now familiar as a household word with young and old. He also commenced the publication of "The Comic Annual," which attained a high popularity, was continued for several years, and proved to be the most popular of his literary speculations. In many of these productions the element of wit predominated largely; while in others there were apparent a fine poetical feeling, and a marvellous lyrical power. It appears that Hood made the acquaintance of the Duke of Devonshire about this time; but though he acted in a friendly spirit towards

the poet, I am unable to discover that the latter derived any substantial advantage from the man of wealth, beyond the barren honour of being permitted to dedicate to him "Tylney Hall," and a volume of "The Comic Annual." During all his years of sickness and toil, the rich man does not appear to have lent him a helping hand. So fared Robert Burns before him—the great folk lionised him for a time; and then left him to sink or swim as best he could. To patrons of this class, who are as ready to shake hands with a Bosjesman or a Tom Thumb as with a man of genius, poets and other literary men should say, as Diogenes said to Alexander, "Stand out of my sunshine—it is the kindest thing you can do; I ask no other favour."

In the year 1834 the great misfortune of Hood's life happened—that which threw a cloud over the remainder of his earthly existence. A publishing firm with which he had had considerable business transactions failed, and entailed ruin on him, leaving him not only without a shilling, but heavily in debt. Most men, in such circumstances, would have applied the sponge furnished by the Court of Insolvency, and thus at once wiped out the whole liabilities; but Hood's delicate sense of honour would not allow him to take this course. What he did was this: he sold all his effects, left every shilling to his creditors, got a small advance from some of the publishers on his

future labours, and started for Germany, where he hoped to live much more economically than in England, work hard, and pay off all his liabilities. Bidding his native land good night, he left behind a large circle of attached friends, and the metropolis, with all its English comforts and attractions for a literary man, and settled in the stupid little German town of Coblentz, on the Rhine, where he was an utter stranger, and where the climate was entirely unsuited to his constitution. Here, for six years, he was destined to tug at the oar like a galley-slave, and to wear out heart and brain in the attempt at retrieving a misfortune for which he was not accountable. While we lament the sad necessity of all this, we must do reverence to the true nobility of soul that prompted such a course, and to the moral heroism that bore him up through it all, not only uncomplainingly, but cheerfully, joyously, making light of it all. Such genuine independence and high-minded integrity recalls a similar incident in the career of Sir Walter Scott, when, in advanced life, he deliberately sat down to write himself out of an enormous debt; and, what is more, almost accomplished it, but broke his heart and brought himself to the grave by the Herculean effort. Alas, that genius, our greatest benefactor, should not only toil for us, but often have to go through life with bleeding breast, and, weary and wounded, find no rest but in the grave!

We must pass hastily over the portion of Hood's life spent in Germany. Though he had his good wife and children with him, yet he never seems to have felt at home—never took kindly to the country or the people, and was ever casting a longing towards dear old England, with its kindly faces and cheerful hearths. In his letters from the Rhine, we find his drollery breaking out occasionally in his remarks on the Germans. To one friend he writes, "I have been to the hotel of an evening, and got a good notion of German philosophy ; perhaps you are not aware that it is laid on with *pipes*, like the gas in London. I have tried to draw some of them ; but a real smoker beats the pencil. It is a mistake, by the way, to say he is smoking ; he is not active, but passive—being smoked. How they suck their pipes, like great emblems of second childhood—so placid, so innocent, so unmeaning—'mild as the moon-beam !'" Of German cookery he said, "It is rank—it smells to heaven." Their beds were so narrow and short, that he described one of them as "a coffin for two ;" and wrote to a friend that he would have no difficulty in finding him "a *spare* bed." The German system of doctoring seems to have astonished him by the strength of their applications. "I heard, the other day," he writes, "of a man having fifty-five leeches on his thigh at once. My wig ! why, they out - Sangrado Sangrado. One of their blisters

would draw a waggon. If I should be ill again, I shall prescribe for myself."

The most wearing of all toil is that of the brain. And now, an exile from home, delicate in constitution, Hood has to undergo an amount of mental labour enough to break down the strongest man. But creditors must be paid, bread must be found for the dear ones at home; and so there must be no pause to the swift-flying pen — no rest for the inventing brain. Like his own needlewoman, in "The Song of the Shirt," it was with himself,

"Work, work, work,
Till the brain begins to swim—
Work, work, work,
Till the eyes are heavy and dim."

Manfully and cheerfully did the noble worker toil on; but the perpetual strain on nerve and brain could not go on for ever. Day by day, and often far into the night, the scratch of his pen was heard; the morning dawning but to witness a renewal of his toil. The inevitable crisis at length arrived. The symptoms of a deadly malady, nursed by anxiety and unremitting exertion, began to develop themselves. Organic disease of the heart, accompanied with frequent attacks of blood-spitting, set in. Still there must be no relaxation of speed; the steed must gallop on till it drops from sheer exhaustion. The printer is waiting, and "copy" must be had; the

article for the monthly must be ready on the day, or woe betide the unhappy author; the "Comic Annual" must appear at Christmas, brimful of jokes, shaking the sides of thousands with its comicalities; while the poor worn-out writer, who has spun the whole out of his brain, lies panting and prostrated, the only one, except his anxious wife and children, who cannot laugh at the humours he is scattering over all England. Still it is "work, work, work," though the poor palpitating heart wants rest sorely, and every additional effort is hastening the inevitable end; "work, work, work," though the very life-blood is oozing through the lungs. How profoundly pathetic to think of the poet writing his "Comic Annual," supplying food for mirth in thousands of homes, pouring out the strangest, wildest, most laughter-provoking conceits, the gayest, most satirical fancies, amidst the fierce attacks of disease, with gloomy prospects around and in the distance, and fears for the dear ones dependent on him heavy at his heart, while before him lay the inevitable goal, the grave, that at any moment might be reached! What a brave spirit that even all this could not quell—that wrought on cheerfully and hopefully, uttering no foreboding, and burying its sorrows in its own bosom! Not for wealth, or fame, or ambition was all this endured, but for duty; and in the pale, worn face of the father toiling for his children's bread, sacrificing self on the

altar of affection, we behold a spectacle that pitying angels might gaze upon. So manfully and cheerfully did he bear his trials, that we find him making his worst symptoms, which would have terrified an ordinary man, the subject of jokes which move at once our smiles and our tears. Writing to his kind friend, Dr Elliot, in England, after telling him how he had just finished a volume of the "Comic Annual," he says, "But who would think of such a creaking, croaking, blood-spitting wretch being 'the Comic?'" On another occasion he writes, "Your health in a tumbler of vitriolic," (that being a medicine he was in the habit of using ;) "can my blood-spitting have ceased because I have none left? What a subject for a German romance, 'The bloodless man!' For four months I have never tasted animal food. Zounds, as I used to say on cattle days, one thing would now make my misfortunes complete—to be tossed by an ungrateful beast of a bullock." He proposed as his own epitaph, "Here lies one who spat more blood and made more puns than any man in England." To another friend he said, "I have to write till I am sick of the sight of pen, ink, and paper. For one half the month I have hardly time to eat, drink, or sleep." Still nearer the close he wrote to Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, "I sleep little ; and my head, instead of a shady chamber, is like a hall with a lamp burning in it all night. And so it will be to the end. I must die in

harness—like a hero—or a horse.” How pitiable! The old tale once more—genius flinging itself on the spears, and the world coldly regarding the sacrifice! Here was one of the finest minds in England compelled to toil in chains, and hurry to an early tomb; and yet no helping hand was held out till it was too late—nothing was done to secure him a little repose to recruit his exhausted energies.

During his residence in Germany his chief productions were, “Up the Rhine,” “Hood’s Own,” a volume a year of “The Comic Annual,”—all the drawings being by his own hand; and numbers of fugitive pieces in prose and verse, which appeared in the pages of various magazines. In 1840, with shattered health, he at length returned to England. With brightening prospects, good medical advice, and a little less worry, he now rallied wonderfully; and though in a state of constant suffering, he had yet five years of life before him. The feebler the body, the more vigorous seemed the mind to grow; the more deeply the tree was wounded, the more fragrant and abundant the balm it yielded. It was during these closing years that he produced those poems that will most surely transmit his name to posterity—such as “The Bridge of Sighs,” “The Song of the Shirt,” “The Lady’s Dream,” “The Workhouse Clock,” and “Miss Kilmansegg.” A year after his return he became editor of the *New*

Monthly Magazine, with a salary of £300 per annum ; and though the labours were great, he was now in comparative independence. After occupying the editorial chair for nearly three years, some misunderstanding arose between him and the proprietor ; and he took the bold, and, as it proved, unfortunate step, of starting a magazine of his own. The toil and anxiety of this new undertaking hastened the progress of his disease. The person with whom he entered into partnership turned out to be a penniless speculator ; difficulties and disappointments thickened ; Hood's health again gave way ; the shadows grew darker and darker ; and soon he was prostrated on the sick-bed from which he was to rise no more. Still the brave heart did not yield. Propped up with pillows, he wrote on, pouring out such noble poetry, in the pages of his magazine, as "The Haunted House," "The Lady's Dream," and "The Bridge of Sighs ;" the "Song of the Shirt" appeared a short time previously in the Christmas number of *Punch* for 1843. It was now that the higher nature of the poet shone out most strongly ; as though he felt that his work was near a close, and that ere the pen dropped from his fingers, he must plead the cause of the poor, and startle the selfish rich from their indolent dreams, and rouse them to a sense of their criminal neglect of the needy. It is in these last effusions of the poet that

we see what glorious possibilities dwelt in the depths of his genius, had time permitted the fruits to ripen, or had health been given him. The sorrows through which he passed made him more keenly alive to the woes of other breaking hearts, and his ear more sensitive to the sighs of the hopeless children of poverty. Friends at length came to his help. Eight months before his death they brought his case under the notice of Sir Robert Peel, with the view of procuring him a pension from the literary fund. That nobleman, with his usual generosity, at once acknowledged the justice of the claim, and procured him a pension of £100 a year, which was continued after his death to his wife and children. Sir Robert Peel accompanied the intelligence of this substantial kindness with a letter so generous and friendly that it must have gladdened the last moments of the poet. Among other things, he said,—“I assure you that there can be little which you have written and acknowledged which I have not read, and that there are few who can appreciate and admire more than myself the good sense and good feeling which have taught you to infuse so much fun and merriment into writings correcting folly and exposing absurdities, and yet never trespassing beyond those limits within which wit and facetiousness are not very often confined.” This was indeed high praise from the grave statesman, with all the cares of empire on his shoulders, and of whom the Duke

of Wellington could say, after his death, "He never uttered what he did not firmly believe to be fact."

But now, alas! for our poet help came too late; the rest for the weary was near. Loving friends gathered round with their sympathy and aid. Bulwer and Dickens sent contributions for his magazine. But the worn and weary man was fast sinking into "the sleep that knows not breaking." "No words," says his daughter, "can describe his patience and resignation, amidst all the fierce sufferings of the last month or two of his dying, as he said himself, 'inch by inch.'" Once he said to his wife and children, "It is a beautiful world, and since I have been lying here, I have thought of it more and more; it is not so bad, even humanly speaking, as people would make it. I have had some very happy days since I lived in it, and I could have wished to stay a little longer. But it is all for the best; and we shall all meet in a better world." Under all the turmoils and pains of a lifetime, his nature has lost none of its sweetness; and after all his sad experiences he still feels the beauty and beneficence of God's world. One night his wife and children listened with blinding tears to his faint, low voice, amid his mental wanderings, repeating the pathetic lines—

"I'm fading awa', Jean,
Like snow-wreaths in thaw, Jean,
I'm fading awa'
To the land o' the leal!

“ But weep na, my ain Jean,
The world's care 's in vain, Jean,
We 'll meet and aye be fain
In the land o' the leal.”

Old friends came to press his hand for the last time, and speak the last farewell. Gentle, serene, resigned, lay the sufferer, a solemn beauty of repose on his countenance. Tenderly he blessed and took leave of wife and children, and calmly awaited the final moment. Bending over him, as the last hour drew near, his loving wife heard him faintly whisper, “ O Lord ! say, Arise, take up thy cross, and follow me.” Gently let us draw the curtains, as he sinks into that repose in which the weary are at rest, and where the hail-storms can reach him no more. His last words were, “ Dying ! dying ! ” as if welcoming the solemn transition.

“ On Saturday at noon,” says a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, “ May 3, 1845, the headache and the heartache were over ; the throbbing brow was quiet for the long rest under the sod of Kensall Green Cemetery. Thomas Hood, the man of many sufferings and most patient spirit, had passed on his way through the valley of the dark shadow, lighted by the sunshine of a heart at peace. His faithful wife, who so clung to him in life, was not long divided from him in death. In the language of an old poet, there were but eighteen months of wooing, and the grave became their second marriage-bed :—

‘ Death could not sever man and wife,
Because they both lived but *one* life ;
Peace ! good reader, do not weep.
Peace ! the lovers are asleep.
They, sweet spirits, folded lie,
In the last knot that Love could tie.’

After long struggling with the storms, and many tossings amongst the billows of life's sea, poor Hood went down. Many a wild wave had burst over him and his frail bark ; still they rose and righted from each shock, bearing right gallantly on. And just as he seemed about to touch land mentally, and win a firm foothold whereon to stand and do yet higher work ; just when the harbour was in sight, and a multitude of friends stood on shore ready and eager to welcome the brave sailor, down he went in sight of them and home." The drawback, however, was that "the multitude of friends who stood on the shore" did not sooner think of sending out a life-boat to his rescue ; and that he was left to buffet with the waves so long that, when at length dragged ashore, life was all but extinct. His own case was another illustration of the truth which he saw so clearly and expressed so well,—

“ But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart.”

Nine years after his death, a splendid monument was erected over his grave in Kensall Green Cemetery, by public subscription. It was inaugurated amid a concourse of spectators, that shewed how

deeply his poetry had sunk into the hearts of his countrymen, and how fondly his memory was cherished.

The limits of this lecture will merely permit me to notice briefly a few of the more striking peculiarities of Hood's poetry. Among the world's humorists Hood is entitled to be placed in the front rank. With Goldsmith, Charles Lamb, and Washington Irving he had much in common—much of the same delicacy, purity, and subtlety in his perceptions of the ludicrous; while in felicitous mingling of the tender and pathetic with the sportive he stands alone. He was no mere provoker of barren laughter, but a man whose mirth had its roots deep in sentiment and humanity, and who saw the serious side of our strange complex existence as clearly as the ludicrous. No one knew better than Hood that the fountain of our tears lies close to that of mirth, and that to unseal the former you must often touch the latter; no one more strikingly exemplified the truth that the profoundest feeling will at times robe itself in quaintnesses and oddities, as though it were seeking a disguise, or in "quips and cranks and wreathed smiles," as if to hide from itself. In truth, under a mask of humours, "whims, and oddities," Hood conceals the earnestness and vehement intensity of a reformer—of one into whose soul the iron of the world's wrongs had entered, and whose heart was burning to right them. Hence often,

in his gayest lyrics, there is an undertone of sadness ; and in the very extravagance of his humour he is aiming his blows, right and left, at bigotry, intolerance, and selfishness ; and bursting irreverently, with a merry laugh, into the deepest sanctuaries of conventionalism. The very fierceness of his sarcasm against oppression and wrong betrays the earnestness of one alive to the true and the good ; and even in his grotesque nonsense we often detect some moral or poetic meaning. But through all a vein of kindness and sympathy runs ; so that while he laughs at the weaknesses, foibles, and wrong-doings of his fellows, and playfully holds them before our eyes, it is never in contempt, or wrath, or hatred. We feel that love is at the bottom of it all. Thus, for example, in one of the severest pieces he ever wrote, his “Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq.,” prompted by no slight provocation on the part of one of “the unco guid,” what fine moral touches are mingled with his sarcasm ; and how admirable what Sydney Smith called his “way of putting a thing,” in remonstrating with bigotry !—

“ The humble records of my life to search,
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts,
But sometimes I have ‘sat at good men’s feasts,’
And I have been where bells have knoll’d to church.

“ Dear bells ! how sweet the sound of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim !
Now loud as welcomes ! faint now as farewells !
And trembling all about the breezy dells,
As flutter’d by the wings of cherubim.
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn ;

And, lost to sight, th' ecstatic lark above
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,—

With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon ;—
O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels, and Doubters !

If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters ?

“ A man may cry, Church ! Church ! at every word,

With no more piety than other people,—

A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird,

Because it keeps a-cawing from the steeple.

The temple is a good, a holy place,

But quacking only gives it an ill savour ;

While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,

And bring religion's self into disfavour.

“ Church is ‘ a little heaven below,—

I have been there, and still would go ;’

Yet I am none of those who think it odd

A man may pray unbidden from the cassock,

And, passing by the customary hassock,

Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,

And sue, *in forma pauperis*, to God.

“ Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan

To cure the dark and erring mind ;

But who would rush at a benighted man,

And give him two black eyes for being blind ?”

One of the finest satires ever written on the worship of the golden calf is Hood's poem of “ Miss Kilmansegg.” Here is one of “ the beauties ” of this piece, which I think is a very characteristic specimen of Hood's manner :—

“ The careful Betty the pillow beats,

And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,

And gives the mattress a shaking ;

But vainly Betty performs her part

If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart,

As well as the couch, want making.

“ There’s Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,
Where other people would make preserves,
He turns his fruits into pickles ;
Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,
At night to his own sharp fancy a prey,
He lies, like a hedgehog roll’d up the wrong way,
Tormenting himself with his prickles.

“ But a child that bids the world good night
In downright earnest, and cuts it quite,—
A cherub no art can copy,—
’Tis a perfect picture to see him lie,
As if he had supp’d on dormouse pie,—
An ancient classical dish, by the by,—
With sauce of syrup of poppy.

“ O bed, bed, bed ! delicious bed !
That heaven upon earth to the weary head,
Whether lofty or low its condition !
But instead of putting our plagues on shelves,
In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,
Or are toss’d by such allegorical elves
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition !”

One of our wisest and best writers, the late Archdeacon Hare, says, “ Nobody who is afraid of laughing, and heartily too, at his friend, can be said to have a true and thorough love for him ; and, on the other hand, it would betray a sorry want of faith to distrust a friend because he laughs at you. Few men, I believe, are much worth loving in whom there is not something well worth laughing at.” Hood’s laughter is of this genial, loving sort, with all the ringing joyousness of a happy, merry schoolboy in its tones—all that natural playfulness springing from kindness which marked the greatest and best of men, such as Socrates, Luther, Sir Thomas More, Cervantes, Scott,

and, most of all, our own gentle Shakespeare. There is no coarseness or repulsiveness in his humour. His wit never breaks irreverently into the sanctities of our nature—never lays an impious touch on what is high or holy—never mocks at genuine affection—never grins sardonically over the mishaps, backslidings, humiliating moral diseases of our poor humanity. His own bitter lot in life had awakened no jealousy or envy in his own heart—no hatred of those who were more prosperous or successful—no scoffing cynicism, like that which tore the heart of Swift, and embittered his existence. He has no bitter scorn to fling at his brothers; for the right, he has ever a kindly cheering word; and for all, smiles and utterances of love and innocent mirth, that are felt in the blood and along the heart. We feel that our life is more beautiful and happy because he has lived, and that our moments of sorrow and abasement are brightened by his words of cheer. Earnestness and pleasantry, humour and tenderness, fun passing at a bound into pathos, wit that shakes the sides, and the next moment makes the eyes overflow, drollery dancing before our eyes, but also showering upon us the gold of wisdom and the pearls of genius,—these are found intermingled in rich profusion in the writings of Hood. And when we take into account the sad background of his own life of suffering and care, and remember that these sportive effusions have come from the couch of pain—that these jests have been thrown off

at intervals as bodily anguish relaxed his gripe—that these comicalities were in many cases jotted down by a pale-faced invalid propped with pillows, who could laugh at the gnawings of disease, and make puns on his very troubles—and that all this cheerful battling with misery was that the dear ones might have bread, we wonder and admire the more, and love our benefactor more profoundly. We understand, too, when we connect his writings with his life, how it is that the undertones of woe so often mingle in his gayest laughter, and that he strikes the chords of sadness even in his wildest outbursts of mirth. These are the sighs, as it were, of his own heart unconsciously escaping—the secret sadness which he so carefully concealed, but could not wholly repress.

As a specimen of the way in which his sadness peeps from behind his sportiveness, take a stanza or two from his “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Clapham Academy :”—

“ There was I birch’d ! there was I bred !

There, like a little Adam, fed

From learning’s woful tree !

The weary tasks I used to con !

The hopeless leaves I wept upon !

Most fruitless leaves to me !

“ The summon’d class !—the awful bow !—

I wonder who is master now,

And wholesome anguish sheds !

How many ushers now employs,

How many maids to see the boys

Have nothing in their heads !

“ Ay, there’s the playground ! there’s the lime

Beneath whose shade in summer’s prime

So wildly I have read !
 Who sits there *now*, and skims the cream
 Of young Romance, and weaves a dream
 Of Love and Cottage-bread ?

“ Lo ! where they scramble forth, and shout,
 And leap, and skip, and mob about
 At play, where we have play'd !
 Some hop, some run, some fall, some twine
 Their crony arms ; some in the shine,
 And some are in the shade.

“ Thy tawes are brave ! thy tops are rare !—
 Our tops are spun with coils of care,
 Our *dumps* are no delight !—
 The Elgin marbles are but tame,
 And 'tis at best a sorry game
 To fly the Muse's kite.

“ Our hearts are dough, our heals are lead,
 Our topmost joys fall dull and dead,
 Like balls with no rebound !
 And often with a faded eye
 We look behind, and send a sigh
 Towards that merry ground.

“ Then be contented. Thou hast got
 The most of heaven in thy young lot,
 There's sky-blue in thy cup !
 Thou'lt find thy manhood all too fast,—
 Soon come, soon gone !—and age at last,—
 A sorry breaking-up !”

More pathetic still are his longings, when looking
 back on the happy days of youth, in another of his
 short poems :—

“ I remember, I remember,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn ;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day ;
 But now I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away.

“ I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer-pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

“ I remember, I remember,
The fir-trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky ;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy.”

Should any one fancy that a poet like Hood, who revelled in the humorous, could not be earnest, pathetic, or reverential, let him remember how Shakespeare, the greatest of poets, has intermingled the tragic with the comic, in his wondrous dramas—how he employs mirth to relieve and even deepen the effects of the awful and sublime, making the rude gibing and carolling of the grave-digger precede the funeral of the fair Ophelia, and the wild wit of the fool in “King Lear,” set the tragic pathos in a more lurid light. To prove that Hood felt in the very depths of his being, and with all a poet's earnestness, the seriousness, the solemnity, the tragedy of man's life on earth, we have only to name such poems as “Eugene Aram,” “The Haunted House,” “The Ode to Melancholy,” “The Death-Bed,” “The Lay of the

Labourer," "The Bridge of Sighs," and the world-renowned "Song of the Shirt." Undoubtedly the man who produced these, with health, leisure, and longer life, might have written tragedies, poems, or songs, that would live in the hearts and memories of men, with those of Shakespeare, Milton, or Burns. But, alas! he had to get up the most marketable article, in order that there might be bread in the cupboard. He punned to live; and when he ought to have been writing poems like the "Song of the Shirt," he was manufacturing drolleries and whimsicalities that would exchange for cash and secure the means of existence. Such, unhappily, is the way of the world; it refuses to recognise genius when living, and employs Robert Burns in gauging beer and whisky barrels, and Thomas Hood in getting up "Comic Annuals" to tickle its sides for a moment; and so must be content with what little of genuine song they can get breathing time to produce. Almost by stealth, and in hurried moments, they do get a little done, and that most imperfectly; but from that which ought to be their life-work they are virtually cut off.

"Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul."

We have few poems possessed of more genuine tragic power in condensed form than Hood's "Bridge of Sighs," or that more effectually touches the fountains of our pity and tenderness. Poor womanhood's

wreck, maddened by want, shame, and despair, hurls herself on destiny.

“ The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver,
But not the dark arch
Or the black flowing river ;
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world !

“ In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it, think of it,
Dissolute man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !”

And then, when bending over the dead, dripping form, dragged from the muddy stream, how the genius of the poet wipes away all her stains, leaving only the beautiful, the womanly—deprecating in that solemn moment all human scorn, all scrutiny into past dishonour, and urging us to think of her “mournfully, gently, humanly,” as a poor, homeless, friendless daughter of Eve, who had been cut off from all love and sympathy, and madly rushed on destruction:—

“ Who was her father ?
Who was her mother ?
Had she a sister ?
Had she a brother ?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet than all other ?

“ Alas for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun !
Oh, it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

“ Perishing gloomily,
Spurn'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast !

“ Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour.”

Of the “ Song of the Shirt,” the words of which have engraven themselves on all hearts and memories, it is needless to speak. It is one of those lays of the heart that go direct to the heart. One who felt deeply the wrongs that are often inflicted, under the sanction of law, on the helpless toilers for daily bread, uttered those burning words that have touched many a conscience and opened many an eye, and brought help to the sorrow-stricken poor. Sad experience ever reminds that we need such poems to soften hard hearts, and to condense and direct to fitting objects the pity and sympathy that are often floating about as mere hazy sentimentality. Hood's song, startling as a shriek at midnight, roused many a luxurious dreamer on her silken couch to think of

the slaves of the needle, whose wasted fingers had wrought the gay robes she wore, and whose tears had fallen, hot and fast, over "seam and gusset and band." But for this midnight-cry, wealth, in its selfish indolence, would never have been made to know

"Of the hearts that daily break,
Of the tears that hourly fall,
Of the many, many troubles of life
That grieve this earthly ball—
Disease and hunger, and pain and want;
But now I dreamt of them all.

"Alas! I have walk'd through life
Too heedless where I trod—
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm,
And fill the burial sod—
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmark'd of God.

"The wounds I might have heal'd!
The human sorrow and smart!
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart!"

Fitly has it been recorded, in few and simple words, on the tomb of Hood, "He sang the 'Song of the Shirt.'" No nobler epitaph could be wished for our gentle poet.

The writer in the *Quarterly Review*, already quoted, finely closes his estimate of Hood in these words:—"When a man like this has lived his life and done his work, and Death has put his 'Finis' to the book, one great question is, 'What has he laid up for himself

out of this life to bear interest in another?' The question on our side is, 'What has he done for the world? what is the value of his life and writings to us?' Hood's life was a long disease, for which death alone possessed the secret of healing; a hand-to-hand, foot-to-foot, and face-to-face struggle, day by day, with adverse circumstances, for the means of living. Yet out of all the suffering he secreted a precious pearl of poetry, which will be 'a thing of beauty;' and in spite of poverty and pain, he shed on the world such a smile of fun and fancy, as will be a merry memory for ever. But it is Thomas Hood's chief glory, that 'he remembered the forgotten.' His greatest work is that which his poems will do for the poor. The proudest place for his name is on the banner borne at the head of their great army, as it marches on to many a victory over ignorance, crime, and wrong." "When we have expatiated on the wit of Hood, or shewn his fancy at the daintiest, the highest praise we can award is symbolled on his own tombstone—'He sang the "Song of the Shirt"'—he gave one fitting voice to the dark, dumb world of poverty." "He is no cold, polished, statuesque idol of the intellect, but one of the darlings of the English heart. We never think of Hood as dead and turned to marble. Statue or bust could never represent him to the imagination. It is always a real human being, a live workfellow or playfellow, that meets you with the quaintest, kindest smile,

takes you by the hand, looks into your face, and straightway your heart is touched to open and let him in." "And whatsoever place his name may win in the Temple of Fame, it is destined to be a household word with all who speak the English language. Though not one of the highest and most majestic amongst immortals, he will always be among those who are near and dear to the English heart, for the sake of his noble pleading of the cause of the poor; and few names will call forth so tender a familiarity of affection as that of rare 'Tom Hood.'"

I close with the memorial lines of Lowell:—

"Let laurell'd marbles weigh on other tombs,
Let anthems peal for other dead,
Rustling the banner'd depths of minster-glooms
With their exulting spread.

"His epitaph shall mock the short-lived stone,
No lichen shall its lines efface;
He needs these few and simple words alone
To mark his resting place:—

" 'Here lies a poet. Stranger, if to thee
His claim to memory be obscure,
If thou wouldst learn how truly great he was,
Go ask it of the Poor.'"

by

Island on a Cann post 241, 247
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